

SPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
IN
THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

ANDREW WILLIAMSON.



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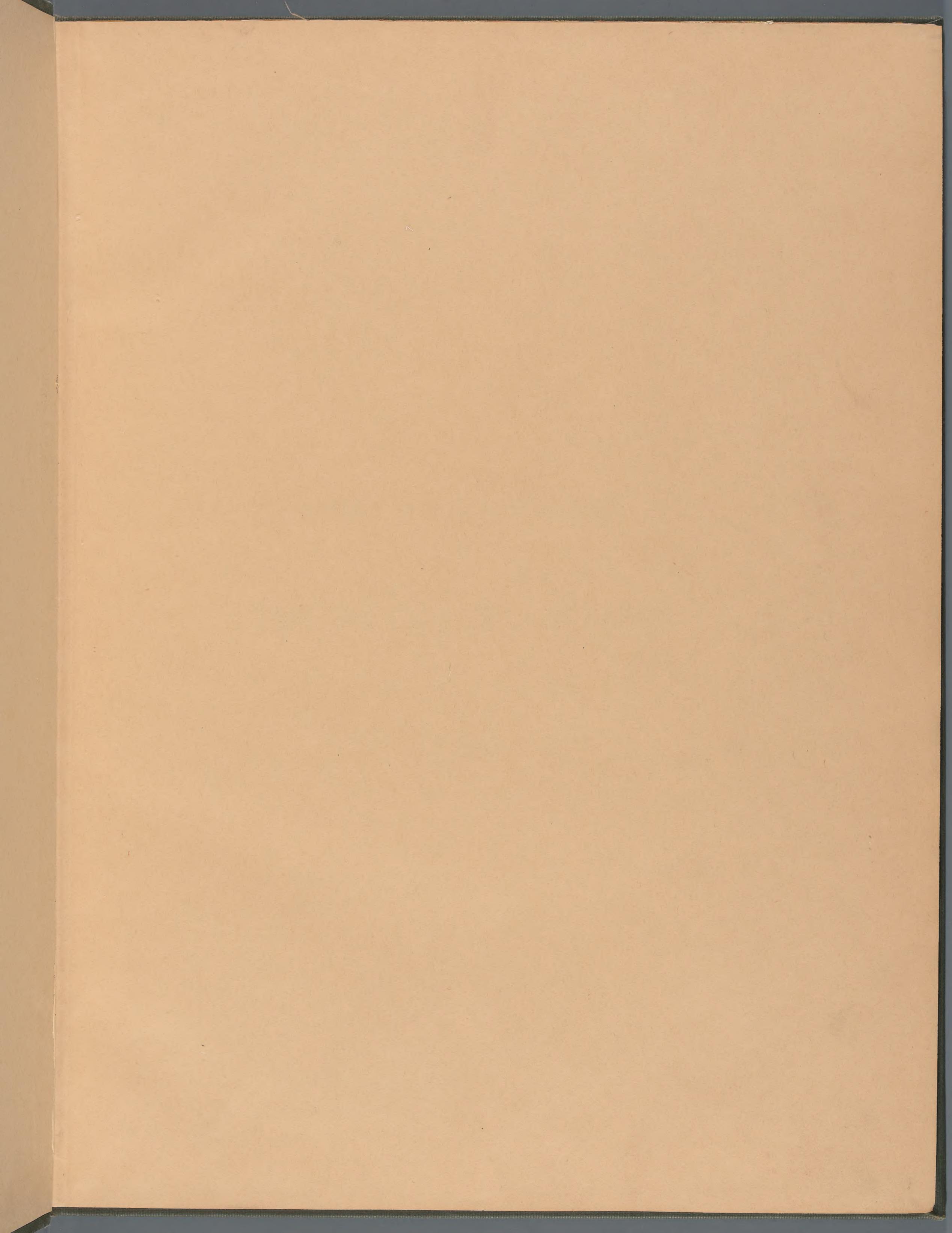
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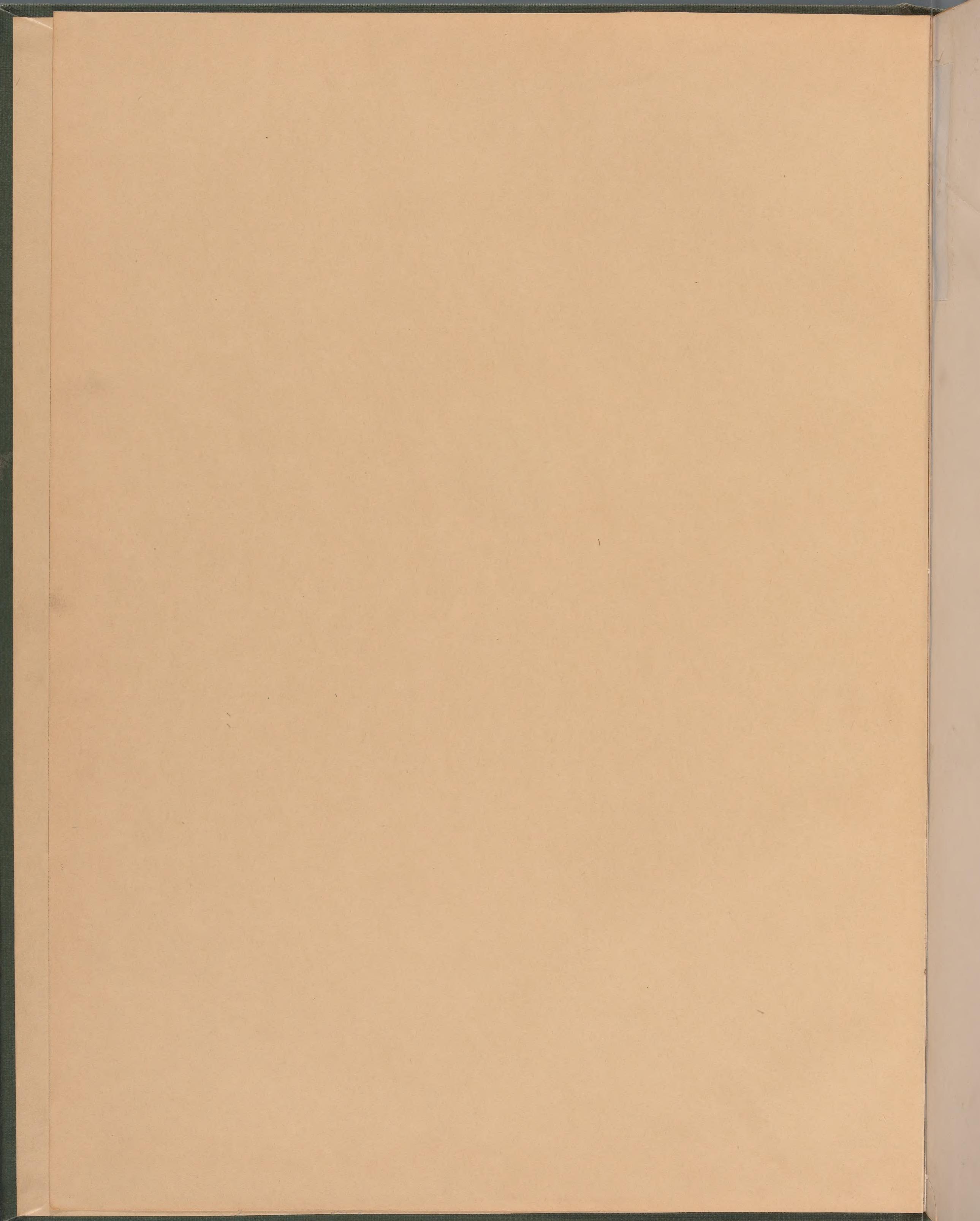
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SPORT & PHOTOGRAPHY

IN

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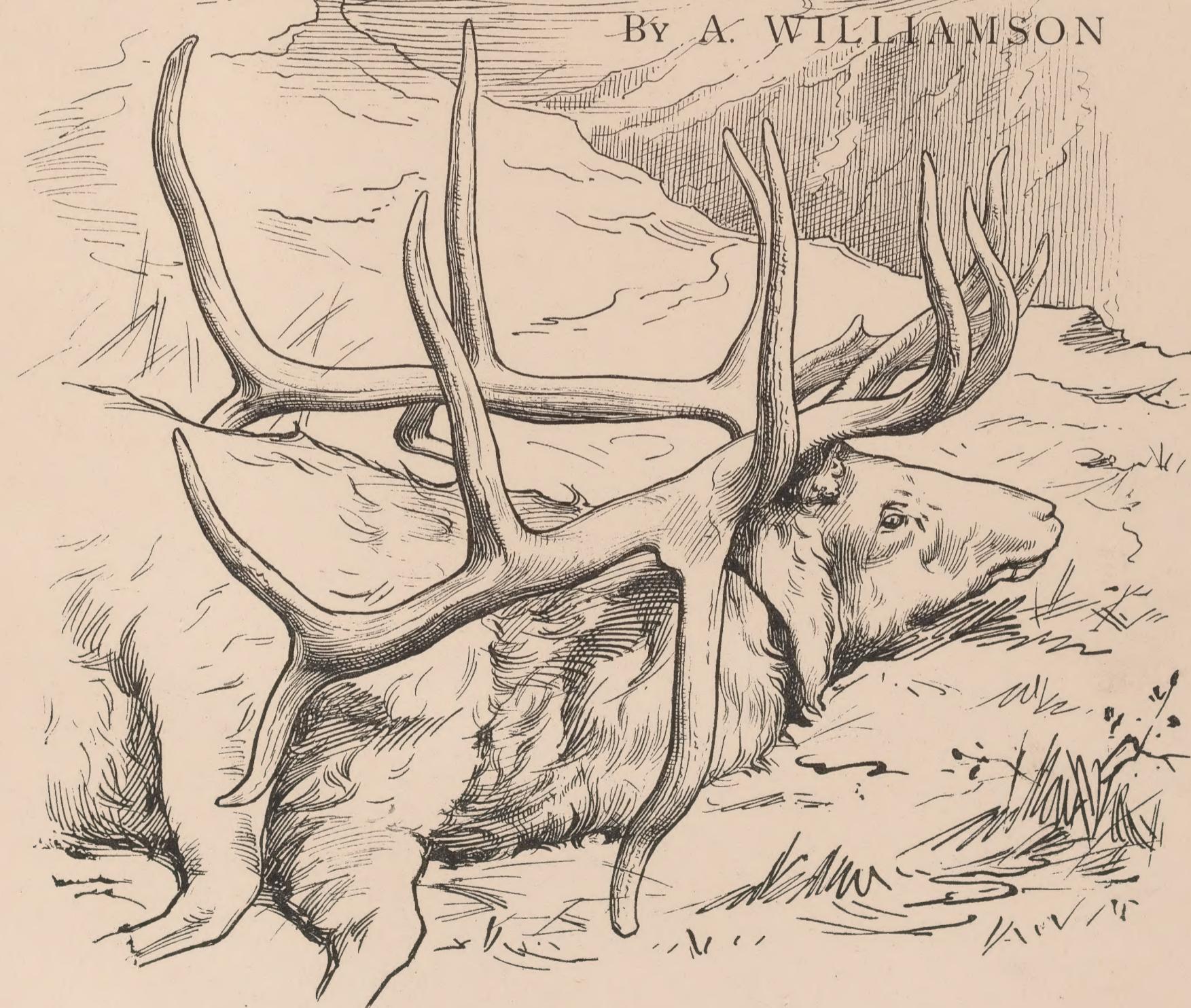
BREAKFAST.



SPORT
AND PHOTOGRAPHY

IN THE
Rocky Mountains

BY A. WILLIAMSON



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INTRODUCTORY.

Difficulty of getting information—English outfit—Arrive in Hall's Gulch—"Baggage smashers"—Prospects satisfactory
—American outfit—Bronko Ponies—An American hunter—Their marvellous tales—Unsuccessful hunt after Bighorn
—Imposed on—Country to be hunted.

THE lease of my Highland shooting expired in the beginning of 1878. Having somewhat tired of stalking stags, of which not one head out of ten was worth taking home; desirous also of a change of scene, and of finding game which would better repay one for the labour and uncertainties of a stalk, in a climate where I should at least escape being bitten to death by midges, or kept to my lodge for ten days at a time by a Scotch mist—the opportunity was embraced to carry out what I had long contemplated, a hunting expedition to the Rocky Mountains of the Far West. For years no opportunity of collecting information on the subject had been allowed to escape, but so little of a really useful character had been gleaned, and as it would be worse than useless to go without some of the more important arrangements being previously made, I had almost given up thoughts of it, when I had the good fortune, through the kindness of a friend, to be introduced to a gentleman from Colorado, Mr. J——, who had not only lived in the Rocky Mountains, to which he was on the eve of returning, but being himself an ardent sportsman, he was able to give me all the information required. The prospects held out were so satisfactory, I at once accepted his kind offer to secure the services of a trustworthy guide, and an invitation to visit him in his mountain home, where my preparations could at leisure be made for the start into "the trackless wastes of the Rockies."

But little was required in the way of outfit on this side. A 500 Express rifle,—ammunition,—and such clothing as a stalker requires in the Highlands, comprised about all it was necessary for me to take. A fowling-piece, which, contrary to the advice of my friend, I added to the list, was so seldom needed it might with advantage, and with some saving in expense, have been left at home. For years past I had been in the habit of taking a wet-collodion photographic apparatus to the Highlands. Taking views of charming bits of scenery, of the scene of a more than usually interesting stalk or favourite salmon pool, and photographs of the more remarkable of the animals and fish killed, was an amusement at the time, while such

pictures serve in after life to recall many a pleasing incident. My friend so strongly urged it should not on this occasion be left behind, despite the trouble it would give, and the risk of breakage to a 12×10 apparatus, it was, after some hesitation, decided it should be included.

Leaving Liverpool on the 18th of July, I arrived in New York on the 28th, and the following night started by rail for Denver City, which was safely reached on the afternoon of the 2d August. I left Denver the following morning by the South Park railway, and late in the evening of the same day found myself in Hall's Gulch, under my friend's hospitable roof. When my baggage, which I had been looking for with some anxiety, turned up a few days after, the outer box containing the chemicals was found to have been smashed to pieces, the splintered sides being only held together by the ropes. Having on a previous visit to America seen something of the rough usage to which passengers' baggage is subjected on the railways, I had taken the precaution of packing my chemicals in a strong inner box, each bottle in a stout pasteboard case of its own, lined with felt. The system answered perfectly, for, save when some of them afterwards burst in hard frost, I had not, during the whole trip, a single breakage.

The report J—— gave of the arrangements he had been able to make was most encouraging. He had secured the services of Wilkinson, one of the best guides in Colorado, a packer to pack and drive the donkey-train (baggage animals being the only means of transport possible in the wild rugged country to be hunted), and a lad to cook, take charge of the photographic apparatus, and do general work. He had also employed a contractor in Georgetown to purchase donkeys, stores, cooking-utensils, etc.; and had himself purchased for me, at low rates, three very good Bronko ponies—strong compact animals of Mexican breed, with excellent legs and feet, showing a good deal of Arab blood, traceable to their Spanish origin. As a rule, these ponies are sagacious and gentle, but have occasionally an "ugly fit." "Bronko Kate," a mare I selected for my own riding, carried me without a mistake or mishap till nearly the end of the expedition. My guide had often warned me she would play me false before I was done with her, but she had been so docile, and I had made such a pet of her, I refused to believe it. I had barely mounted her one evening, after a hard day's work, at about five miles' distance from camp, when, a herd of blacktail appearing in front, I sprang from the saddle and fired a quick right-and-left. Up went "Bronko Kate's" heels, and the next moment she was galloping for camp, leaving me to drag my wearied limbs there as best I could. This was her first "ugly fit;" her last will be described later on.

The ensuing three weeks were spent in getting my photographic apparatus into working order, arranging details with my guide, and doing a little in the way of hill-climbing to enable me in some measure to overcome the breathlessness which, at an altitude of from 10,000 to 12,500 feet, at first so punishes a new arrival from the plains. I had also one or two unsuccessful hunts after mountain sheep, the most wary animal in the mountains. How in one of these hunts—if such it could be styled—I became the dupe of an American hunter, is rather an amusing tale; proving how necessary it is for the European sportsman to be on his guard in listening to the stories brought, and the promises of sport held out, by these men.

As we were one morning taking a quiet stroll, a hunter named Beler came to ask J—— "if he would not come down to his ranch to hunt mountain sheep. Only two nights

ago he had seen, he guessed, a herd of forty, with some splendid rams among them, on the mountains behind his house." "There is a chance for you," said J——, turning to me. As he was unable to leave, it was arranged I should go to Beler's ranch, a distance of eighteen miles, for two days' hunting. As I rode down the gulch the following morning, admiring the grand scenery in its gorgeous colouring, and met passengers and waggons on the way, doubts as to the existence of Beler's mountain sheep so close to a road would now and again flit across my mind; but had not J—— vouched for the man's respectability? Perhaps the bighorn was not such a wary animal after all. When, however, after supper Beler's herd had increased to sixty, and he told me of his having shot a fine ram from his door at 600 yards, my prospect of bagging a bighorn on the morrow began to wear a less rosy look. American hunters are notoriously given to romancing. Not one out of ten but has his dozen of marvellous escapes from grizzlies to narrate, the truth being that not one out of five will venture to face him, or has even seen one. They will tell you, too, they can with ease knock over a bighorn or blacktail at 400 to 500 yards.

Next morning, after an early breakfast, Beler proposed, as it would be too hot to go after sheep till the afternoon, we should go and fish; they would in the evening come down to feed, when I should be sure of a shot. Finding but little sport in killing trout, few of which weighed more than a quarter of a pound, I soon gave up fishing, and amused myself with drawing the confiding Beler on to tell me some of his marvellous tales of hunting. Elk, he said, later in the season came to within a few miles of his house. He had taken a gentleman, who was mad to kill one, up to within forty yards of a large herd, and "he was darned if he didn't miss the whole outfit." He knew of a herd of mountain bison which we could go and hunt when my expedition was over. As I knew there was not an elk or mountain bison within seventy miles of us, I could not help wondering what this man's object could be in so imposing on a stranger. When, in the afternoon, we began what he called "our hunt," I soon found this mighty hunter was but a sorry walker, and never got beyond three miles from his house. He of course "could not make out what had become of the sheep, guessed it must have been at the bighorn the campers were blazing away last night." When I told J—— the result of "my hunt," he was very much disgusted with the campers. I had my own thoughts on the subject—a suspicion that the tale of the forty sheep was a pure invention to get the confiding "Britisher" to his camp for the dollars he would be sure to get out of him.

By the 22d August our preparations for a start into the mountains were completed. In the Appendix will be found a list of such an "outfit" as I should, with the experience I have gained, take with me. It differs little from the one I had. Some trifling articles are omitted, while others, which we much missed, have been added.

By Wilkinson's advice it had been decided we should make a trip to the Piney Range, and after shooting over the mountains there about timber-line, cross over to the Eagle and hunt on the mountains in the direction of the Mount of the Holy Cross. Save by my guide, who had the year before gone to both districts in quest of new hunting grounds—his old haunts having, owing to the opening up of the country, been shot out—these had never before, he believed, been penetrated by the white man. Some risk from Indians there would be, but the Utes were generally friendly, and we had not much reason, he thought, to anticipate danger from them. Wapiti and blacktail he had seen in such numbers, he felt sure I should

be able to get as many heads as I wanted. "Had stalked close to a fine band, in which there was one head, the biggest he had ever seen, worth going all the way to get, but his donkeys being loaded and unable to get it out, he had not disturbed them. He had not seen any 'sign' of bighorn, but had often enough come on the trail of the grizzly bear, one of which he had killed."

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CHAPTER I.

PLATE I.

THE GAME OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

Wapiti—Blacktail—Mountain Sheep—Puma or Mountain Lion—Grizzly Bear—Mountain Bison.

IN a work which does not aspire to do more than give a few notes, explanatory of the photographs taken, and a short account of the excellent sport obtained, a lengthened description of the animals killed hardly comes within its scope. I may as well, however, seeing a good deal of confusion has been caused by the strange nomenclature in use throughout America, briefly describe, before I take my readers into Colorado's "happy hunting-grounds," the different kinds of big game to be met with.

WAPITI (*Cervus Canadensis*), better known in America as the elk.*—The antlers and shape of body clearly mark it as belonging to the red-deer family, of which it is the largest known species, and not to the elk, which it in no way resembles in shape of body or horns, the latter being round, not palmated as in the case of the true elk. There is, however, this difference between the antlers of a wapiti stag and those of the red deer of Europe—the cup or crown of the latter is rarely, if ever, found on the former, which generally terminate as shown in Plate IV. The stags shed their horns in March and April. While the new antlers are growing, they remain in seclusion about timber-line, where they have been summering separate from the hinds. By the middle of August the horns have attained their full growth, and about the end of the month are free of the velvet. The stags are then in the finest condition, and come down to the parks and valleys just below timber-line, where they and the hinds may be seen feeding together. Here they remain till the middle of October, when the

* American nomenclature must often puzzle the general reader. A wapiti stag or hind they speak of as a bull elk or cow. Caton, in his work on the antelope and deer of America, uses the terms wapiti buck and doe. In the chapter headed "Congeners," he classes the moose and Scandinavian elk as closely allied, and a few pages farther on proceeds to show that the *American elk* (*C. Canadensis*) and the *red-deer* of Europe (*C. elaphus*) had probably a common origin! The bison is in America always spoken of as the buffalo, an animal nowhere found on the American continent; a herd of elk as a band or bunch; and stalking as still hunting.

snow compels them to change their quarters to the lower valleys and river bottoms. During the winter they often band together in large herds, when, being weak and out of condition, they are but too frequently killed in great numbers by pot-hunters. The following season, as the snow disappears, they work back to their summer quarters at timber-line, feeding on their favourite food, the cowslips and young grasses. The rutting season begins about the middle of September, and ends about the last week in October. The bellow of the stag is wholly unlike that of the stag of the Highlands. It is a sort of prolonged shrill whistle, which may be heard at a great distance; but nothing I can compare it to will give any idea of what it is like. I first heard it, late in the evening, come from a dense forest close at hand, and shall never forget the impression it made on me, it sounded so strange and weird in the still solitude of the dark wood. I stalked them when the ground admitted of it in the same way. During the heat of the day, when they retired into dense cover, we could only work up to them guided by the sound of the bellow, when the greatest caution had to be used to avoid treading on decayed sticks. Occasionally, however, when I had worked up close to a herd, and could not open up the big stag, I sometimes found it answer to snap a withered twig. Maddened with love and jealousy, and taking the sound to be caused by the approach of a rival, he would then slowly advance to meet him, and thus give me a shot I might otherwise have failed to get. It was, however, a dangerous ruse, inasmuch as, if not in a pugnacious humour, the stag was more likely to be alarmed than attracted by it; one I never employed till all else had failed. The venison was fine-flavoured, differing from any I ever tasted. It is said to be more nutritious than beef, and the experience we had of it fully confirmed the statement.

Surprise has been expressed that while red-deer annually shed their antlers, these should so rarely be found in the Scotch Highlands. It has been said the stag secretes them, but not the slightest evidence has been adduced to show he does anything of the kind. However incredible it may appear to those little conversant with the habits of the animal, there is no doubt the deer eat them themselves. In the Island of Lewis, where I stalked for eight years, I have more than once, when lying within range of a herd, seen a hind chewing the antlers of a stag when lying, and that this was a common practice was proved by the fact, that we rarely in the Long Island killed a stag after the middle of September which had not some of his tines more or less injured from this cause. My predecessor in Aline forest had, before his departure, destroyed an old pony on one of the hills. Soon as the ravens and rats had removed the flesh, the deer came nightly to chew the bones, all of which had disappeared at the end of a few months. From the quantities of shed antlers in perfect condition, found in the country which forms their habitat in the spring, wapiti and blacktail appear to have no such craving. Possibly it is satisfied at the salt-lick, to which they periodically resort, often travelling great distances for the purpose.*

* An analysis made by Caton of several pairs of antlers shows "they are composed of the same constituents as internal bones; that they are, in fact, true bones, though in the proportion of their constituents they differ slightly from ordinary bones. Healthy ordinary bone consists of about one-third part of animal matter or gelatine, and two-thirds of earthy matter, about six-sevenths of which is phosphate of lime, and one-seventh carbonate of lime with an appreciable trace of magnesia. The animal matter gives the bone elasticity and tenacity, the earthy matters hardness and rigidity. The antlers of the deer consist of about thirty-nine parts of animal matter and sixty-one parts of earthy matter, of the same kind and proportions as are found in common bone."

Farther on, in reference to the growth of the antlers, he says, "At the lower extremity of the antler the enlargement continues, till the external growth of the antler is well advanced, forming what is called the burr, where, when the growth is completed, the bone quite surrounds some of the arteries, forming canals through which they pass, while others pass through deep indentations, which protect them almost as effectually as do the canals. This shows us that those naturalists who have attributed the death of the velvet to the compression

BLACKTAIL (*Cervus macrotis*), about the size of the ordinary red-deer now found in the Highlands. Of a beautiful silvery-gray colour, shading off to a warm cream tint. Head small, with wide, branching antlers. Ears long and coarse. Tail longer than in other species, and ending in a small black tuft. They may be found all over the Rocky Mountains at any season, but large numbers retire to timber-line on the snow melting, where they remain till the end of October, when they come down to their winter quarters. They shed their horns from end of February till middle of May. The new antlers do not become perfect till middle of September. Though we came across herds almost daily, when I declined, save when we required meat, to kill a stag in velvet, it was the 19th before I succeeded in seeing one with a clean head. The rutting season begins in October, and usually ends about the last week in November, during which they are never heard to bellow or utter any kind of sound. The venison of the blacktail is excellent, more delicate in flavour than the wapiti.

MOUNTAIN SHEEP or BIGHORN (*Ovis montana*). The head of this somewhat extraordinary animal closely resembles that of a domestic sheep, while its body and coat are more like that of a deer. It is larger than the blacktail, and is found in high, rocky ledges, where it usually lies up during the day. Being much of the same colour as the rocks, it is difficult to see, and when seen, by no means easy of approach.

PUMA (*Felis concolor*), or Mountain Lion, is common enough in the Rocky Mountains, but is rarely met with, owing to its lying during the day in thick cover, and prowling about at night. Of all the carnivora it is perhaps the most cowardly, invariably flying from man. Its chief prey is the blacktail. Though we frequently came across the trail of the puma, I never had the good fortune to see one.

GRIZZLY BEAR (*Ursus horribilis*).—Though at least one half of the stories current in America as to the ferocity of the grizzly do not deserve much credit,* yet, from the numbers of men who have been killed or seriously mauled in their encounters with him, and the dread in which he is universally held, he must be regarded as by far the most formidable of the wild animals of America. Of great size, gifted with enormous muscular strength, and armed with immense teeth and claws, while his tenacity of life is extraordinary, he proves, when wounded, a vindictive and dangerous assailant—one the sportsman who has not thorough confidence in his aim and ability to keep cool, had better, when encountered, let go in peace; but under no circumstances should a shot be risked, unless a vital spot be exposed, for if hit in any other, no bullet will stop him. He will, however, if left alone, unless suddenly stumbled on at close quarters, when he will get on his hind-legs with a "hough! hough!" in a way calculated to try the strongest nerves, or if it be a female with cubs, rarely if ever attack

at the burr of the vessels leading into it, are mistaken. This burr, instead of compressing those vessels by its increased growth, is admirably designed to protect them from injury, and the protecting canals and indentations never do fill up by continued deposits of bone material, as occurs to the canals leading into the antler above. Hence it is that when the velvet is rubbed off or torn away, it is found gorged with blood thrown up by these unchecked arteries."—*Cator's Antelope and Deer of America*.

* In a work published in 1878 by a chaplain in the U.S. army, the following is gravely stated as fact:—"Often a big grizzly will walk into camp as unconcerned as you please, stroll up to a tree where the game is hanging, help himself to what he wants, and go away. Nobody interferes with him. If he is satisfied to go off with the meat, the hunters are satisfied to let him. I have seen a bear walking along with an entire elk carcass with the antlers on, weighing eight hundred pounds, tucked under his arm."

man, but will, on the contrary, beat a retreat with all the haste he can. Nocturnal, as a rule, in his habits, save in cloudy weather, when he will occasionally come out of cover to feed in the day-time, the hunter may, even in a district where they may be far from scarce, as shown by their tracks, be long before he sees one. The soft padded foot leaving no impression on dry ground, and as bears often travel great distances in the night, it is impossible to track one until snow falls, when, if the wind is favourable, he may be followed with every prospect of a shot being obtained. From the limited experience I had, I should say that while his sense of smell is the keenest, those of sight and hearing are not so acute. Unlike some of its congeners, the grizzly does not climb trees. So well is this known, that hunters, when pursued by him, often seek safety by getting up the tree nearest at hand; nor does he, as is generally supposed, attempt to hug man in attacking him, but he invariably strikes at the face with his formidable paw, one blow of which, fairly delivered, rarely fails to stretch the hunter senseless on the ground.

My guide once witnessed a most amusing incident. A hunter he had with him, who had never seen a grizzly, while walking at some distance below him, suddenly came face-to-face with one. He at once fired, and without waiting to see the effect of his shot, turned and ran, while the bear, thoroughly scared, as quickly made tracks in the opposite direction. My guide's shouts to his friend only made him go the faster, until, on finding he was not pursued, he pulled up. As may well be supposed, he has not to this day heard the last of the comical way in which he was first "entered to bear." The grizzly, in addition to honey, for which he has a special liking, feeds on the wild fruits, such as cherries, rasps, huckleberries, etc., which are to be found in their season in great abundance, but he appears to prefer, when he can get it, the carcass of any dead animal, no matter how putrid, which he carefully, after a meal, covers up with earth, to hide it from wolves, foxes, etc. When other food fails him, he lives on roots, the larvae of insects, ants, and grasshoppers.

BISON (*Bos Americanus*).—Until the last few years, the bison was found in most parts of the Rocky Mountains. Now, in Colorado, but one or two small herds are left, which, hunted as they are, will soon be exterminated. The bison of the mountains differs somewhat from the bison (buffalo) of the plains. It is shorter in the leg, darker in colour, with longer hair, and is more shy and difficult of approach.

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BIG-HORN.

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CHAPTER II.

PLATE II.

Leave for timber-line—Our cook proves a failure—Whiskey *versus* tea—Billy forced to become teetotaller—Danger of drinking in intense cold on the mountains—The Blue Range—Singular effect after sunrise—The Black Lake—Difficult mountain ascent—Timber-line—Scenery.

THE donkey train with stores, etc., should have arrived on the 17th of August. As there was no intelligence of its even having left Georgetown on the 19th, I accepted an invitation from Colonel Candler, the manager of the Boston Mining Company at St. John's, to pay him a short visit. St. John's being but two miles distant from Montezuma, a mining town on the track to Georgetown, and about fourteen miles from Hall's Gulch, the outfit was stopped on its arrival there on the 21st. Thanks to Colonel Candler's kindness, who was otherwise of great service to us, we thus saved two days, which, as wapiti had by this time got rid of the velvet, were a real gain to us. We started from Montezuma on the 22d August, and after a march of fifteen miles along the Snake River, over an easy but tame and uninteresting country, formed late in the evening our first camp under the Blue Mountains. Passengers we met on the way "guessed we were going on a hunt, and hoped we should have quite a good little time." And so I found it with Americans everywhere, always ready to meet the stranger with a kindly greeting, and to render, if required, any assistance it might be in their power to give. I had not been much prepossessed with "Billy," who, in addition to other work, had been engaged to cook; but was hardly prepared to be told, when I ordered him to get supper ready, "You will have a variety of dishes, for I never cooked one in my life." Here was a nice predicament just at the outset! It was at once, to my relief, solved in manful fashion by Hayes, who, having had some experience in camp life, proffered his services as cook for the rest of the expedition; while "Billy," reduced to the ranks, had for the future, to his disgust, to undertake the general drudgery of the camp.

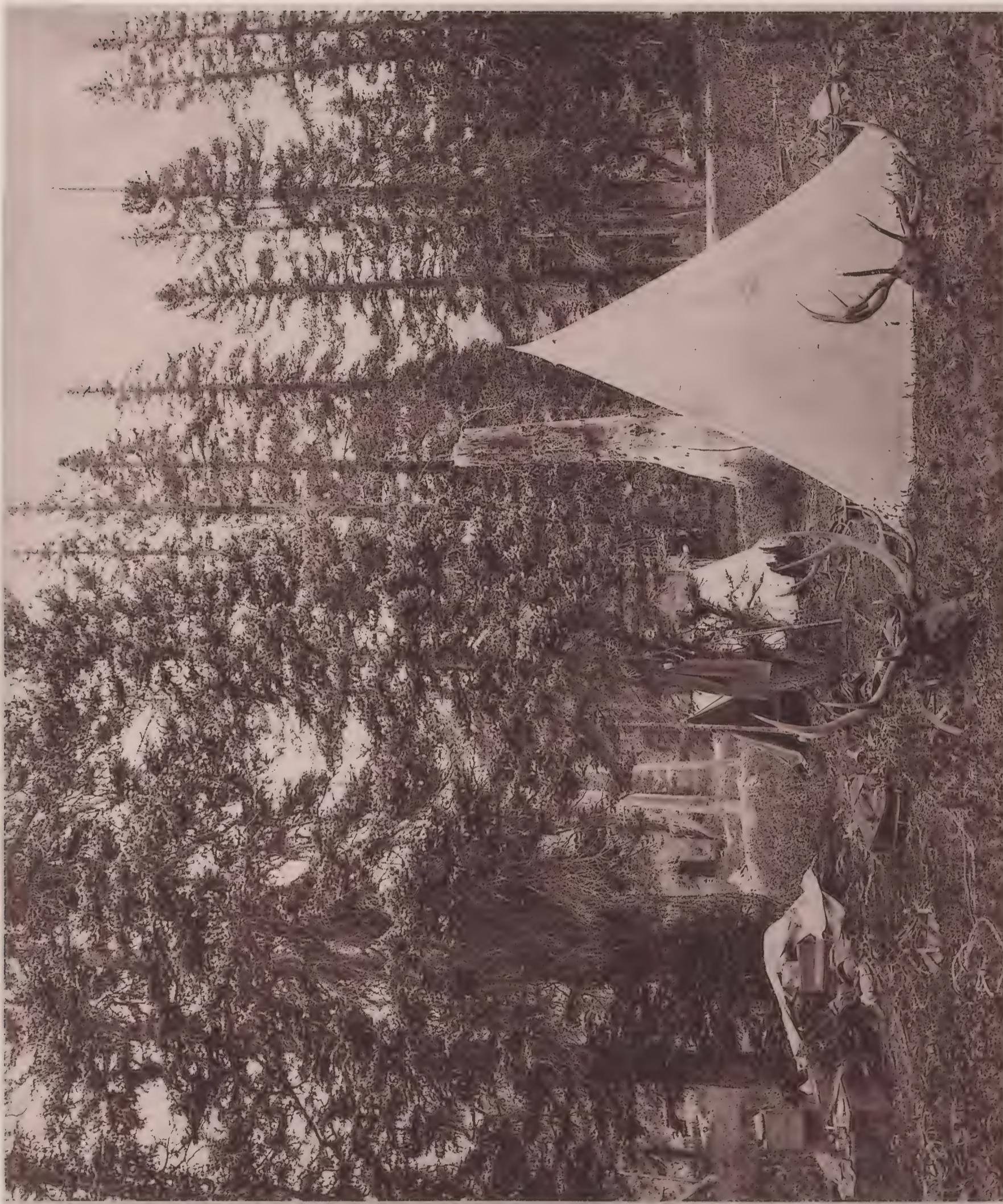
Very much against my wish (for when hunting I never drink anything but cold tea) two gallons of whiskey for the use of the men had been included among our camp stores, and I was told I should not, when the weather became severe at "timber-line," be able to get on without it.

I had many years ago found what a delusion it is to suppose spirits give strength to a wearied traveller, or warmth when exposed to biting cold; the truth being that, beyond a mere momentary fillip, they leave us weaker and less able to stand cold, than if we had altogether abstained. The advantages of cold tea as a "pick-me-up" to the wearied sportsman are well known in India, but as nine men out of ten who shoot in this country believe in whiskey, and would probably smile if recommended to take a flask of cold tea instead, I would ask those at least who have what is really hard work to get through, for once to make a trial of it; to eat half their lunch at midday, washing it down with a little pure spring water; and when really fatigued, and not before, as evening approaches, to drink the tea as they eat the remainder of their lunch. The almost immediate passing away of all feeling of fatigue will surprise them.

When we went into camp, I learnt that Wilkinson had found many years ago he could not get on in the mountains if he touched spirits; while Hayes, having been mixed up in more than one drinking row where murder had been committed, had become a teetotaller. "Billy," however, had no such painful reminiscences. We had not been long in camp when I observed, as we returned from hunting, he was somewhat unsteady in his gait and thick of speech. When he at last met me with "'Sh'-opes you've had-sh good 'sh sport," I replied sharply, "Billy, you have been at the whiskey-jar." "No, shir; don't like 'sh shpirits!" "Just bring me the jar then." As I pitched it thereafter into a pool in the Piney, I added, "As you don't drink whiskey, Billy, and none of us do, no use burdening the jacks with it." Billy's face was a study as he replied, while Hayes and Wilkinson roared with laughter, "Pity to throw away sho much fine liquor!" He was sober afterwards.

The evil effects from drinking spirits in the mountains are, I was informed, so well known to miners working at a high elevation, that if one of their number, who is known to drink, even moderately, should go down in severe cold to the nearest village or township, they invariably watch for his return, in case he should get frozen to death; while they regard the total abstainer as one who may with perfect safety be left to take care of himself.

Our course the following morning lay along the base of the Blue Mountains, which, from "timber-line" downwards, appeared to me the very *beau ideal* of a hunting country; and so, but a few short years ago, it was. Now, as far as game is concerned, it is a desert. The river "Blue," which flowed on our right, was then a bright translucent stream, famed for its trout. It is now, from the effect of mining operations, a stream so muddy that no trout can live in it. Shortly after we got comfortably settled in camp, there came on a thunderstorm, followed by a night of heavy rain. When I looked out of my tent in the early morning, a scene presented itself, which for beauty and grandeur could hardly have been excelled. Masses of dense vapour went rolling along the face of the mountains. The peaks of deep cobalt blue, and where capped with snow, reflecting in the morning sun an exquisite reddish gray, appeared in the clear upper air, as they towered far up into the heavens, to come much nearer than they really were; whilst the base, from which the vapour had just lifted, clad in a dark veil of greenish gray, faded away in the far distance, as if in no way connected with the lofty peaks above. Some such effects I had seen produced by a mist in the Isle of Lewis, but nothing approaching this in sublimity, and in the exquisite beauty of its colours. After breakfast, leaving the train to follow, Wilkinson and I struck off into the mountains to see the Black Lake, a dark mere embosomed in lofty hills. It formed a picture black and dismal enough. I saw it, however, at great disadvantage;



FIRST CAMP AT TIMBER-LINE.

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a thunderstorm having come on just before we visited it. When we reached camp, some time after dark, it was raining heavily; but supper was ready, and as we afterwards lay and smoked in my tent, I was agreeably surprised to find how exceedingly comfortable, if he has but the will, man can make himself even under the most adverse circumstances. There is somehow a wild fascination in camp life, a feeling of freedom, which makes me feel now, as I write, an intense longing to be back under canvas away from the busy haunts of man.

Next day we left the Blue River on our right, and began the ascent of the mountains which lay between us and the Piney Range; and after a long and hard day's toil, pitched our tents on the side of a hill, from which we had a fine view of Rabbit-ear Mountain and Middle Park. We were now about to enter a region which, save by my guide, had never, so far as we could learn, been penetrated by the white man. As the last mountain which lay between us and timber-line was steep, of great height, and in some places almost impassable, we decided to leave Billy with half of the stores behind, and to send Hayes back with the donkeys to bring them on next day. On topping the hill next morning, I for the first time found myself in one of those beautiful "Parks" which form such a striking feature in the scenery of the Rocky Mountains; while there faced us, on the other side of the "Park," the great mountain of primeval forest through which we had now to force our way. For about six hours we toiled over ground strewn with large trees in all stages of decay. At times, stopped by a barrier of rocks or trees piled one over the other, it appeared as if we should never get through; but after many a turning movement, and by occasionally bringing the axe into requisition, timber-line was reached on the afternoon of the 26th August.*

The country we were now going to hunt consisted of ranges of pine-clad mountains, disfigured in places, often for miles, by Indian fires, which had left the gray, needle-like stems of the trees standing or strewn around in wild confusion. High-lying valleys, with their "Parks" of fine natural pastures, varying in extent, which, with their herds of blacktail, irresistibly reminded one of an English park and its fallow-deer. The meadows seen here and there with willow thickets, favourite cover of the grizzly, marked where the beaver had dammed up the sparkling trout-stream; while great red bluffs, the entrance to some dark canyon, stood out from the mountain side, and relieved the dark green of the forest. The whole overlooked by everlasting snow-peaks, which, with the gorgeous colouring of the landscape, especially at sunset, combined to form a scene unrivalled in sublimity and grandeur. There is but little variety in the foliage, everywhere pitch pine, with occasional patches of quaking aspens, sarvis bushes, and stunted oaks. Ferns are rarely met with, while of the great variety of flowers I saw in all their glory at the beginning of August, there were none now to be seen. Wild fruits, such as strawberries, rasps, cherries, currants, huckleberries, etc., abounded. When I add that there were no snakes† or insect pests of any kind, it almost seemed as if in choosing to come to these far-famed hunting grounds I had stumbled on a sportsman's paradise.

* The mean elevation of timber-line in Colorado is 11,600 feet. Almost the whole of our hunting during the three months we lived under canvas, was done close to timber-line.

† The rattle-snake does not exist in the mountains.

CHAPTER III.

PLATES III. IV. AND V.

Wapiti "sign"—A successful stalk—Death of my first stag—His great size—First attempt at tracking two stags—
A beautiful head—Find the donkeys had stampeded during the night.

ON forcing our way through the last of the wood at timber-line, we entered on an extensive plateau, undulating and dotted with clumps of trees, where a suitable site for camp was selected; and as we were much in need of venison, I then, after a hasty meal, went out alone on the chance of meeting with a stag. I had gone but a short distance when I came on a marshy spot where some large animals had been feeding, and as the water was still muddy, we had most probably scared them by the noise we made when first coming out of the wood. From the tracks, as big as a heifer's, I knew they must be wapiti, and as but two hours of daylight remained, I hurried to a rocky ridge which ran for some distance on my right, where, without danger of being seen, I could have a good view of any animals coming out to feed. About the centre of the park a belt of trees stretched some way across to the dense wood which enclosed it on the left, with openings here and there through which I could see well into the ground beyond. For some time I kept along the face of the ridge without seeing anything. It was now, however, the time when deer come out to feed, and as I had reached a point which gave a more extensive view, I sat down and waited. But a few minutes had passed, when I saw three wapiti hinds come in sight, quietly feeding across one of the openings in the belt of trees, about half a mile from where I lay. To make sure of the wind being right, I had to go back some little distance, when, bending to the left, I succeeded in getting some scrub between us, which enabled me to get within 300 yards. I had hoped, by this time, more would have come in view, but apparently there were but the three hinds, and though I felt most reluctant to open the ball by slaying a hind, yet as we were in need of venison, and this the only chance I was likely to get, I decided to go on with the stalk and take one of them. For 200 yards farther I crawled, often flat on my face, having constantly to put aside decayed sticks, and at last reached a fallen tree (Plate III.), about 100 yards from where the hinds were still quietly feeding. After waiting for some time



SCENE OF THE FIRST STALK.

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IV.



THE FIRST HEAD.

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to get my wind, I raised myself for a shot, but could not bring myself to take it. Three times I raised my rifle, and as often took it down, and lucky it was I did so; for a few minutes later on, a noble stag came out of the wood on the left and joined the hinds. As it was hardly possible anything could occur to prevent his being mine, I lay for some minutes watching him as he now and again threw up his head with its great branching antlers. To my first shot he never moved, while the hinds trotted off. "Could I have missed him? Could this be a return of 'stag fever'?" Again I fired, and still he stood motionless. A look through the telescope showed me that both bullets had struck him full in the shoulder, close to each other. I had yet to learn how many expanding bullets it sometimes takes to floor a wapiti, when one solid ball would have been sufficient for the purpose. As I lay quietly waiting for the end, which I thought must soon come, two blacktail bucks appeared on the ridge. Creeping back and slipping behind some scrub, I made for a knoll in the hope of getting a shot as they crossed into the "Park." They, however, kept along the ridge and never came within range. Finding, as I returned, the stag had lain down, and little thinking more lead would be required, I went straight to him. The instant he saw me, he was on his legs and moved off. A third time I fired, this time hitting him a few inches below the heart; still he kept moving, and it required a fourth ball to finish him. As I looked at the great brute, as big and as heavy as a sixteen-hands horse, I felt less surprise at the quantity of lead it had taken to kill him, and, as I surveyed his great massive neck and shoulders, better able to understand why Americans speak of them as bulls and cows.

The dream of years had at last been realised. After a fairly difficult stalk, I had, alone and unassisted, killed my first wapiti stag, with a beautiful wide head of thirteen points, antlers 53 and 51 inches, with a span of 42 inches. The feeling of exultation natural at the moment, was however soon followed by one of pain at the suffering inflicted on so noble and harmless an animal. When stalking in the Highlands of Scotland, I had made it a rule never to fire at a stag unless I really required him, and then only when I could get the shoulder-shot, at a distance from which I could make tolerably sure of dropping him in his tracks.

I now saw the error I had committed. The shoulder-shot, with such bullets as I was using, had comparatively little effect on a wapiti. To get in behind the shoulder for the heart, was the only chance of killing him on the spot; a consummation without which, however interesting and exciting a stalk may have been, there must ever arise in the mind of the true sportsman a feeling of sad regret, when he thinks of the prolonged suffering which a little additional care or patience might have prevented.

My men, having heard the shots, soon appeared on the scene, and were very hearty in their congratulations at my success. The "gralloching" was quickly got through, when we returned laden with meat.

On the 28th of August I rode with my guide some distance from camp, to hunt a very likely bit of country we had seen the day before. The weather was so oppressively hot, I was forced to leave coat and waistcoat where we picketed our ponies, and to hunt in flannel shirt, knickerbockers, and lawn-tennis shoes, than which there can be nothing better, when the slightest noise is almost certain to be fatal. We very shortly found the tracks of two large wapiti stags which had crossed the range in the night and gone into the woods below. For a time, until we got into lower and softer ground, it was difficult to follow the trail on dry stony

places, and for a time but slow progress was made. As the tracks became more easily seen, I went first stealing along with all possible caution, carefully avoiding everything in the shape of dried sticks, and availing myself of the cover afforded by thickets of undergrowth and young trees which now and again lay in our way. My first experience in tracking game, I felt a new excitement and an interest one hardly ever afterwards feels; enhanced, in the present instance, by such noble animals as were in front of us, one of which at least, but for some error on my part, or a change of wind, I felt must be mine. Visions, I had, of a right-and-left; but these had before when toyed with, so often ended in disastrous failure, I thrust them aside. For more than a mile, my heart thumping against my ribs, I stealthily plodded on, until I had almost reached a forest which stretched down the gulch below and extended again up the mountain side. In its recesses, sheltered from the fierce sun, I had no doubt we should now find them. Resolved not to throw away a chance, even the slightest, I crept up to a strip of thick cover about eighty yards outside of the wood, and cautiously looked through an opening. There, under the shade of the nearest tree, stood a magnificent stag, broadside on, his head—for he had evidently heard something—anxiously turned in my direction. Steadily but rather hastily I aimed for the shoulder, forgetting in the hurry of the moment to take him *behind* it. After going for a hundred yards, he turned and looked, when I gave him the contents of the second barrel. For a short time we lost sight of him as he took down the gulch, but a few hundred yards farther on, we found him lying in a hollow, when a ball in the heart ended his career. His was a head I should have been sorry to lose; perfect, without even the slightest chip on one of its fourteen tines. It is, I think, one of the most beautiful and symmetrical I have ever seen. His measurements, carefully taken on the spot, were as follows:—

Length from tail to nose	8 feet 6 inches.
Height at withers	16 hands 1 inch.
Girth round heart	6 feet.
Length of antlers	54 and $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
Girth round burr	12 inches.
Do. above burr	$10\frac{1}{4}$ inches.
Span inside beam	45 inches.

On returning to the spot where I fired my first shot, we saw where the other stag had been lying beside him. He had, as his tracks showed, slipped into the wood on the left without our having seen or heard him.

On getting up the next morning, we found the donkeys had stampeded. Hayes at once went on their trail, and late in the afternoon found them on the other side of the range, three miles beyond our last camping ground. Though tracks of the mountain lion and grizzly, which had approached camp in the night, were sometimes seen, yet our donkeys, as we got farther into the mountains, did not in this way give further trouble. They probably knew instinctively that their safety lay in keeping at night very close to camp.

V.



WAPITI HEAD.

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CHAPTER IV.

PLATE VI.

Change camp to Sheephorn Creek—A grand hunting country—An unsuccessful stalk—The bellow of the wapiti—Follow on the trail—Secure a good head—A blank day.

AS we had now pretty well shot out the ground within easy distance of camp, and as it was evident from the few tracks we had seen, that wapiti were not in any numbers on our side of the Range, we crossed to Sheephorn Creek to have a look at the country beyond. Once fairly across, the scene which met our gaze so impressed me from its beauty, and no less so from the prospects of sport it held out, for as far as the eye could reach down the great valley which lay below us, were "Parks" and wooded slopes, the very country for wapiti, I could but gaze in silent wonder and delight at the thought, that amid such scenery I was now free to roam undisturbed at will; to hunt, fish, paint, or photograph, as the fancy led me.

Descending, we rode through some of the Parks; where, finding recent "sign" of wapiti everywhere, we moved the following day and camped in a secluded spot in the very heart of what appeared to my guide the best of the country. As he drew my attention to an elk trail which ran through it, he said, "Do not be surprised some morning or evening if you find a bull elk walk straight into camp." I thought, at the time, he was joking. It will be seen later on how near a stag came to doing so, and the reception he met with. On our way back we came on a young stag of ten points, but as I had resolved, unless in need of venison, to take nothing with less than twelve tines, did not molest him. In the evening, as we rode over the range, two good herds showed themselves in one of the Parks below, but it was then too late for us to do anything with them.

The hills in the rear of our new camp had at one time been swept by Indian fires, and were now strewn with dead timber. As such ground is a favourite resort of wapiti and blacktail, we decided to hunt them first. A worse style of country to walk over, it would indeed be difficult to imagine; what between damage to the legs from jagged stumps of withered branches, constant stepping over trunks, and, in places, climbing where these lay in piles, it was, under a hot sun, hard and wearing-out work, of which but little could be got through in a day. It

was, moreover, exceedingly difficult to make out wapiti when lying on such ground. The colour of their bodies was very much that of the logs, their dark heads and necks looked not unlike charred stumps, while their antlers closely resembled the withered branches which lay everywhere about. And still more difficult was it, under such circumstances, to work up to them without being seen.

We had toiled the best part of the day without seeing anything, when, coming over a ridge which gently sloped down for some distance to a hollow, we saw through the telescope, among some low bushes on the other side, five wapiti hinds. In the hope there might be a stag with them, we lay quiet for a time, and were at last rewarded by seeing *three* get up from behind the bushes and begin feeding. To make sure of the wind being all right, we had to go back some way and come in on the left, working along on our hands and knees among the fallen timber, to get under cover of the thickets in the hollow. After much labour in worming ourselves, now over and then under fallen logs, the most dangerous part was got over. The hinds had risen and were slowly making their way to the nearest wood, while the stags, higher up and nearer to us, lingered behind, feeding. Apparently we had everything in our favour, but many are the slips between the "cup and the lip" in stalking. Suddenly I felt the wind on my back; the next moment the hinds had it and were trotting off. The stags on the other side of the hollow were out of it, but seeing the hinds go, they became restless, and slowly moved up the slope towards the wood on the left. As one of them had a fine head with remarkably long tines, I was much disappointed. They were, however, but little alarmed, and through their having fortunately parted with the hinds, there was still a hope we might come up with them in the wood. But it was not to be. Though we followed them for some distance, we did not again get within sight of them.

Towards evening we kept along the mountain side, from which we had a good view of the Parks below, and would be sure to see any wapiti coming out to feed. Tired and sore after so much rough walking among the fallen timber, we after a time sat down to rest behind a ridge which overlooked a grassy flat, only about 200 yards in breadth, which lay between us and a dense forest. As we sat plucking the huckleberries which grew in great profusion, there came all at once from the wood a prolonged whistle. Clear, round, and pitched in a high key, it had, as it came from the recesses of the dark forest, a strange weird sound unlike anything I had ever heard. Accustomed to the hoarse roar of our Highland stags, I was surprised—especially as there was nothing bellicose in its tone—when my guide told me it was the note of defiance of a wapiti stag. For a time, hoping he would come out to feed in the open, we quietly waited behind the ridge. As the bellow, however, when repeated, showed he was going from us, most likely to some feeding-ground on the other side of the wood, we at once crossed and cautiously searched for his tracks where we had last heard him. These, as there were several others with them, were easily found. Taking care to avoid treading on the withered sticks that lay about, I stealthily went on the trail; for fully an hour without hearing or seeing anything, but always keeping a sharp look-out ahead, I followed as it led me, until at last I saw, about 130 yards in front, a young stag and two hinds. A few minutes later, two others came in view, but as neither had a fine head, I waited in the hope of the master of the herd—which I was sure I had not yet seen—putting in an appearance. Again, from a dense bit of cover on the right, there came the same whistle, which had but an hour before sounded so strange in my ears, and a magnificent stag crashed through and



WAPITI HEAD.

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charged his rivals. As he returned and was driving off the hinds, I broke a branch to arrest his attention. Mistaking it for the approach of a stag, he instantly wheeled, when I got a bullet well in behind his shoulder, quickly followed by a second. He staggered for a few yards and rolled over, dead. He had a remarkably fine head of sixteen points, and measured as follows :—

Height at withers	16 hands.
Girth round heart	5 feet 10 inches.
Length from nose to tail	8 feet 2 inches.
Length of horns	52 and 53 inches.
Span	51 inches.
Girth round burr	12½ inches.
Girth above burr	10½ inches.

On a long stretch of fallen timber sloping up to a mountainous track, covered as far as eye could reach with large pine trees, Wilkinson had the year before seen several herds of wapiti, out of which he had taken two fine stags; and had, on his way back to camp, met and killed a large grizzly. As such a lucky day was pretty sure, when the same ground was next revisited, to be followed by a blank one, I felt somewhat reluctant to give up a day to it, especially as it was some way from camp, and my previous experience of hunting such ground had not very favourably impressed me. He was, however, so urgent I consented to give it a trial. It is by no means an uncommon thing for deer to make a favourite *habitat* of a place the one season, and during the next, from some motive best known to themselves, altogether to neglect it. Such we found to be the case now. Not only did we see neither wapiti nor grizzly, but not even "sign" of either. As we returned, we fell in with a small herd of blacktail, which I stalked with some difficulty and ended by missing the best buck, clean, at 150 yards.

CHAPTER V.

PLATE VII.

Again find the same herd—Waiting for them to come out to feed once more proves unsuccessful—Follow on the trail—

A blacktail buck—Again fail—Do a little washing and tailoring—A stag approaches camp—"Beecher" spoils the stalk—Kill a blacktail—Cross "The Divide"—A difficult country—Advantage of hunting on foot—Stalk and death of a stag—Abnormal growth of horn—She bear and cubs—Change camp to the Piney—A rough country.

AS the ground where I had killed my last stag had now had two days' rest, in the hope of finding the three good stags which had then escaped us, and resolved to hunt the country far and near till we came on them, we made an early start on the morning of the 4th September. Park after park was searched with the telescope, but save a few herds of blacktail, which we carefully avoided disturbing, we saw nothing till midday. As we then crossed a ridge and came in view of some parks which lay on the opposite side of an intervening gulch, we saw a herd of wapiti, and had just time, before they retired into a wood close to them, to make out with the telescope the very stags we were in search of. Determined they should not on this occasion escape us, we hurried across to some willows, where, on the chance of their coming out to feed, we lay quiet for a couple of hours; trusting, should they have gone on, that the stags' bellow would inform us of the fact. Tired at last of waiting, we went back a short way, and under cover of some undergrowth, which fringed the wood, noiselessly entered it. We had barely done so, when a stag's sudden bellow on the far side showed us that in remaining quiet as we had done, we had but been losing valuable time. So it ever was. On no occasion when we lay expecting deer to come out to feed, did they ever do so. The plan I subsequently followed, of going at them at once, inch-by-inch it might be, I am now convinced was the best one. There will often be failures from change of wind, from the snapping of a twig, or from deer when lying seeing you before you see them; but these very dangers and uncertainties are the very charm of all sport. Reduce the chase of wild animals to a certainty, and who would care to follow it?

I had gone but a short way on the trail, when my guide, by a gentle tap on the shoulder, drew my attention to a blacktail buck feeding quietly but eighty paces from where we stood. He carried a pair of such magnificent antlers, I longed to possess them. The wapiti being

barely within hearing of a shot, I had little fear of moving *them*. But the blacktail's horns were still "in velvet," and after a moment's hesitation, loth to kill so beautiful an animal, whose head would most likely be useless as a trophy, I followed the good old rule of sticking to the hunted stag. For half a mile or so, where the wood was tolerably open and free from fallen trees, we were able to get along at a good pace. Thereafter, the ground being more broken, and the forest so dense that we could seldom see fifty paces in advance, it became necessary, while eagerly listening for the faintest sound, and keeping the sharpest look-out ahead, to move with extreme caution. At last we caught up the herd in a very thick bit of wood. Before crossing a small but steep ridge I took the precaution to slowly raise my head and look over, when, finding we were within forty yards of them, I quietly slipped unperceived behind a fallen tree. The wind seemed all right, and as a bellow from the big stag as he rose from his lair in an adjoining thicket, almost made me start, so close was it, I began to congratulate myself on the good bit of trailing we had done. The position was, however, not without risk; the wind, ever shifty in a wood, might betray us, or some prying youngster, before the stag showed himself, might come our way and "get" us. At one time two good stags offered me a most tempting right-and-left, but I held my hand, feeling sure their attentions to the hinds would very speedily bring their big rival on the scene; yet luck was against us. Again it was the wind which saved him, and again it was a hind that had for some time on my right been giving me some anxiety which had "got" it. With a guttural "Yulp! yulp!" she sniffed the air suspiciously and trotted off. I ran quickly forward on the chance of a shot, but seeing, as the large stag ran before me, that I could only inflict a wound which had no chance of stopping him, I let him go in peace. It was Fate, not our own fault. True, we had erred in wasting the two hours before entering the wood, but otherwise we had done our utmost, and it was some satisfaction to feel I had refrained from a shot that could have done me no good, and would have but caused the noble beast a time of prolonged suffering. Turning to Wilkinson as I returned, I said with a laugh, "The wind has saved him again, but we will have him yet;" and so we did, but it was weeks before he and we again met, and in another part of the country.

The following day I photographed a rather pretty view near camp, washed my flannels—a much more arduous business than I had calculated on—and did a little tailoring in the way of patching and sewing up rents in my stalking suit, which already began to look rather the worse for the wear.

The next morning I was awoke by Hayes coming to tell me there was a "bull" bellowing on the hill above camp. To throw on my clothes and pick up my rifle was the work of a moment. By the time I got outside he was in full view, slowly walking down the hill in a slanting direction towards us. Fearing as he came nearer that the sight of our tents might scare him, I quickly ran under cover of the brushwood, which extended some way up the hill, to meet him. Another two hundred yards and I should have been within easy range, when "Beecher," one of the donkeys, began to bray with all his might, the others joining in full chorus. The stag, unaccustomed to such an unearthly din, stood for a few seconds, and then walked uphill. I followed under cover of some trees on the left, but from the difficulty I experienced in breathing in the highly-rarefied atmosphere, and the pace at which a wapiti gets over the ground even when walking, I was never able to get near to him. Somehow I never felt very kindly to "Beecher" afterwards, and if he got well whacked on the march—which he did often enough—I am afraid I never from that time interceded with Hayes in his behalf.

The amount of venison four hungry men can consume in the mountains is simply marvellous. Notwithstanding the quantities of meat we had lately brought into camp, the larder, it was found, could only furnish enough for the morning's breakfast. Clearly we were, for the time, out of luck in hunting wapiti; but as we could always make sure of a blacktail, we took Hayes and a pony with us to take a fresh supply of meat to camp. As we crossed the divide between Sheephorn Creek and the Piney we saw a herd of blacktail grazing in a Park below. After an easy stalk I succeeded in getting within 100 yards, and shot a good fat buck, with the haunches of which Hayes returned to camp.

The feeding-grounds on this side of the Divide were greener and more luxuriant than any we had before seen. Altogether it looked an even better country for game, but one, as I could see, much harder to work. I was destined, before our hunt was over, to many a day of toil, punished in wind and limb in its dense primeval forests, so thickly strewn with fallen timber; and in climbing its vast mountains, which, as we dragged our weary limbs up their steep sides, at times appeared as if they would never end. Some men suffer so much from the rarefied air, that they do all their hunting on horseback. Where game is very plentiful, as in Wyoming, a fair bag may in this way be made, but where, as in the best parts of Colorado, it is less so, from the timely notice given of his approach, a rider often scares game without knowing it, and gets but one shot for ten he would have obtained if his hunting had been done on foot. To this fact, and to that of the guides so seldom taking their party during the proper season direct to timber-line, may be attributed the poor sport so often obtained by the English sportsman in Colorado.

On Hayes leaving us, we descended to the "Parks" below, but save one small herd, in which there were only young stags, we saw nothing. Late in the afternoon, as we worked our way up the mountains, which led to the only place where we could cross the *Divide*, we came in view of a great gulch. On the left, on the opposite side of a small stream at the bottom, a strip of young trees extended some way up the hill, between which and a thick wood lying on the right, there lay a grassy slope, dotted in places with clumps of thick scrub. I had barely remarked to my guide what a place for a stalk, when three stags, one of them a very fine one, came out of the wood on the right, and began a game of romps, the two younger ones at times playfully fighting with each other. Wilkinson asked me if I was "game to go and stalk them." When I looked down the great mountain we had just ascended, and thought of the five miles which lay between us and camp, I was for an instant tempted to answer No. I felt, however, that to such a question put by an American, there could, for the credit of "the old country," be but the one rejoinder, "Yes, certainly, if *you* are."

Keeping along the top for a short distance, we succeeded, under cover of some aspens, in reaching the bottom of the gulch, unseen. After crossing the stream, we crept through the young wood on the left, to the spot nearest which we had last seen the wapiti. On looking through the undergrowth which skirted it, we found them; the big stag, fortunately nearest to us, lying in long grass, at about 200 yards from where we stood. There was no cover between him and us, only a small hollow outside of the wood, into which it was impossible to get without being perceived. We therefore slipped back and tried lower down, where some trees and scrub in the open, and only 120 yards from where he lay, would, we thought, screen us. The stag being on higher ground, these proved but barely sufficient for our purpose. Getting on our backs, we slid down into the hollow and crawled, at times flat on our faces, until we



A SUCCESSFUL STALK.

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reached a large fallen tree a few yards in advance of the scrub. Had time permitted, I should now have patiently waited for him to get up; but being near sundown, and camp five miles off, most of these uphill, I whispered to Wilkinson to break a twig while I held myself in readiness to take him as he rose. The sound only made him move his head, till with a loud snap Wilkinson broke another. He was on his legs in a moment, when I rolled him over with a bullet in his heart. His measurements taken on the spot were as follows:—

Height at withers	16 hands and $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch.
Girth round heart	5 feet 10 inches.
Length from nose to tail	8 feet 3 inches.
Length of horns	49 and 50 inches.
Span	43 inches.
Girth round burr	11 inches.
Do. round burr	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

He had a fine wild head of thirteen points; long tines, with a back point; which is well shown in the photograph. Such an abnormal growth is by no means uncommon in the mountains. Of the three stags I killed with one or more tines growing out of the back of the beam, the head in Plate XIII. was the most striking example.

On our way to camp we came on the fresh trail of a she-bear and two cubs. We followed as long as we could, but soon lost it on dry rocky ground.

On the 8th September we changed camp to the other side of the range between the Sheephorn and the Piney. From the steepness of the ascent in one place, the suddenness of the descent in another, and from the generally rough nature of the ground, strewn with boulders and fallen timber, our "train" had a hard and dangerous time of it. The donkeys were constantly losing their footing, rolling downhill and scattering their loads. My mare, "*Bronko Kate*," as I was leading her over an ugly place, nearly jumped on the top of me. As I stepped aside to avoid her, I rolled downhill, until caught up by some bushes, but fortunately escaped without injury. Though the distance was only six miles, it was late in the evening before, utterly worn out, we reached camping ground. The site we had chosen commanded a magnificent view of the distant ranges of mountains to the south-west. In its front and rear, a succession of Parks, varying in size, extended for miles; these gently sloped up to a rocky ridge, which bounded them on the east; while on the west a great gulch, a few hundred yards below, ran for five miles down to the Piney River, its farthest side clothed with dense primeval forest, in which and its vicinity I was later on to have many an adventure with grizzly, wapiti, and blacktail.

CHAPTER VI.

PLATE VIII.

A morning visitor—His reception—A bad shot—Difficulty of judging distance in the mountains—Wilkinson trails him up—Death of the stag—His enormous size—Photograph the scene—Our donkeys have “quite a good time”—Change camp to the Piney Creek—The gray comes to grief—Head of stag carried off by a grizzly—Lie in wait—Bear does not put in an appearance.

“**T**HHERE’S a great bull staring into camp,” was the announcement, uttered by Billy in great excitement, which early the following morning startled me from a sound sleep I was enjoying after the previous day’s hard work. I at first thought it was a ruse to make me get up, for Billy was not one who liked to be kept waiting for breakfast, but seeing he was in earnest I hastily dressed, though somewhat sceptical, and picking up my rifle, was quickly outside my tent.

In a belt of young spruce trees, to which Billy now pointed, I could, only half-awake as I was, at first make out nothing, save what appeared to be but withered branches; and was about to return to my tent when the branches moved, and to my surprise I made out the head and antlers of a fine stag. As at any moment he might beat a retreat into the wood in his rear, my chance of a shot seemed at the best but a poor one. A large fallen tree lying about fifty yards from where I stood, directly between me and the stag, promised excellent cover; and as time in such a case was everything, I lost not a moment in slipping down, and crawled to it with all the haste I could, to find him, as if spell-bound, still in the same position. It seemed hopeless to expect a better chance than the one I now had. I had, however, so often in stalking found my reward in waiting, and being averse from seeing him go off wounded, I decided to wait for what might turn up. But a few moments had passed, when, as if anxious to have a closer inspection of the strange intruders on his privacy, he moved out and stood in the open at what appeared to me but 100 yards from where I lay.

The scene was one not soon to be forgotten. There, in one of those lovely glades so often met with in the Rocky Mountains, with, for a background, a forest of dark green, capped by a towering ridge of rocks of the brightest red, stood an unusually large wapiti stag, in the finest condition, his sleek coat of the warmest cream-colour, shaded off on the head and legs to

a dark red-brown, glistening in the morning sun. As he proudly threw up his great wide head, and in wonder gazed at our camp, evidently tempted to come nearer, yet afraid to do so, I almost felt as if for an hour of such a picture, I could have foregone my shot and let him go in peace, when a turn of his head in the direction of the forest on his left warned me I had not a moment to lose. Steadily aiming for the heart, I fired. A sudden swerve showed he was hit, and the next moment he was out of sight, crashing through the wood.

Wilkinson now joined me. We at once went on his trail, but for fully a mile saw no "sign" of his being wounded. I was beginning to fear I had missed him, when we found a drop of blood; but as it was not unlikely some time might elapse before we came up with him, we decided to return to breakfast. On the way back, puzzled to account for my shot not having proved a more deadly one, I stepped the distance and found I had under-estimated it by 75 yards. At times it is exceedingly difficult to accurately judge distance in the mountains. On one occasion Wilkinson and I fired at a stag at what he calculated to be not more than 120 yards. Our bullets having lodged not two inches from each other, in a fallen tree just under his heart, we stepped the distance and found it considerably over 200 yards.

Intending to finish the day hunting some distance from camp, we after breakfast mounted our ponies, and had ridden but a short way beyond where we had left off in the morning, when the wounded stag jumped up in some thick wood in front of us. Before I could spring from my pony and use my rifle, he was out of sight, but Wilkinson, running quickly to one side, succeeded in getting a shot as he crossed a small opening. As he felt sure he had hit him, and would give but little further trouble, we went back to our ponies, and without waiting to remove the saddles and give them the run of the lariats in a place where they could get something to eat, hurriedly tied them by their bridles to the nearest tree, and cautiously stole along the trail on foot. For a time it led us a tolerably straight course, through a large wood and across a park. Here swerving to the left, the stag, evidently hoping to throw us out, twisted about for some time, until on finding that Wilkinson, who had never been at fault for a moment, was not to be shaken off, he took down the face of a deep gulch. At the bottom we found frothy blood, showing he was shot in the lungs. Here for a time the trail was lost, but after a few casts we again hit it off, leading across a brook and up the other side of the gulch. It seemed hardly credible an animal shot in the lungs could get up a place so steep, but all doubt was soon set at rest, for a few hundred yards farther on, we heard him force his way through decayed timber. For fully another mile along the face of the gulch he kept struggling on; occasionally we heard him, but only once did I get a glimpse of him. At last he reached the end of the wood, when a great precipice forced him to turn and move uphill. He had gone but a few yards when Wilkinson, getting a sight of his head in some bushes, rolled him over with a bullet in the neck. Down he came with a crash, and was only saved going down a sheer fall of some 200 feet by a rock, which, as shown in the sketch, fortunately lay on the edge. Wilkinson's ball had gone through one lung at least, while mine had taken effect a few inches below the heart. So ended this most exciting chase. We had now leisure to think of lunch, and on looking at our watches were not a little amazed to find it past six o'clock, and bethought us of our ponies so long tied up without anything to eat.

The stag proved of such enormous size,—measuring, as he lay, 9 feet from nose to tail, 17 hands at the shoulder, and 6 feet 8 inches round the heart,—I regretted we had no means of weighing him. Wilkinson thought he could not be under 1200 lbs., and, as we afterwards

found when assisted by our two men, the four of us could with difficulty move him, he was probably not much under the mark. As invariably happens in the case of very large-bodied animals of the deer tribe, he did not carry proportionally large antlers. The head was nevertheless a very fine one, quite perfect and of great symmetry. The horns measured 48 and 49 inches in length, 13 inches round the burr, with a span of 44 inches.

The tracking up of this stag, for certainly not less than seven miles, was a performance I should not, for a deal more trouble than he gave us, have missed seeing. While I could see nothing in the way of "sign," as unerring as a sleuth-hound, Wilkinson held on, without, save in the case mentioned, once being at fault. When to my inexperienced eye he appeared to be making a cast at random, and I asked him what he saw to show him he was on the trail of the wounded stag, he would point to a freshly-broken twig, bruised leaf, or single drop of blood, "sign" sure enough, yet such as none but one long experienced in woodcraft could have detected.

The stag, as he lay on the verge of a precipice overlooking a great gulch, with the Piney Range and distant mountains in the direction of the Mount of the Holy Cross fading away into the far distance, formed a picture so interesting, I decided to leave him as he lay and to photograph the scene the next day.

The task was one surrounded with many difficulties. In addition to the distance, the wood in places was so dense we had frequently to cut a passage to enable the donkey carrying the apparatus to get through; water, too, was scarce, and had to be carried from a distance, while the chance was, that, by the time we got there the wind would have risen, rendering the taking of a picture on a spot so elevated impossible. This, however, was provided against, as far as we could, by taking blankets with us to shelter the camera during exposure.

This being the first occasion camp had been left with no one to look after it, and donkeys the most inveterate of camp thieves, strict injunctions were given to Billy and Hayes to have all made secure before leaving. The sequel will show how these were attended to, and what came of it. I had been anxious to start early, but as usual it was ten o'clock before we got under weigh, and after three before we reached the scene of operations. The day was brilliantly clear, though, as I expected, a stiffish, but fortunately fitful, breeze was blowing; and eventually, after one or two failures, by bringing the blankets into use, and availing myself of times when the wind blew gently, I succeeded in getting three good negatives. The gulch below seemed so likely for bear, and less than a mile from the spot we had selected for our next camping ground, we, after cutting off the head, and dislodging the large stone on the edge, succeeded, with much difficulty, in rolling the carcase of the stag over the precipice. The head was carefully hidden in some bushes to conceal it from bears, whereupon we returned thoroughly done up by a most laborious day's work, but did not reach camp till long after dark.

The experiences one has when camping out in the Rocky Mountains are, as a rule, very delightful. The scene which now awaited us was of a somewhat different character. With the exception of our tents and some unopened boxes, the camp was a complete wreck. Cooking utensils, plates, pans, knives, forks, venison, flour, meal, sugar, salt, torn-up sacks, and even our tobacco—save what lay scattered on the ground—had all disappeared. Tin basins, coffee-pot, and plates, battered out of shape, appeared to have afforded our donkeys,



A REST AFTER A LONG CHASE.

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in their revels, infinite amusement. To these camp thieves nothing appears to come amiss. I was at first incredulous as to the venison and tobacco having been eaten by them. Next morning I offered them some of each, and, to my surprise, both were devoured with great gusto. Our loss, though heavy, was not irreparable. The large tin dishes and coffee-pot were hopelessly ruined; but after a little hammering and tinkering, the plates were made to serve our turn, and fortunately but a week's stores had been left out.

The day after, we moved camp to the Piney. As the route in some parts was exceedingly difficult and dangerous, the photographic apparatus was packed on the gray, our strongest pony. Save some of the donkeys coming to grief and unshipping their packs, the first few miles were got over without mishap of any kind. Later on, as Wilkinson and I were riding in front along the face of a steep hill strewn with fallen timber, we heard a crash and shout for assistance. Turning back, we found Billy helplessly staring at the gray, which lay, heels-uppermost, some twenty feet below him. On reaching a very ugly place the animal had made a rush, lost his footing, gone down head-over-heels, and was now—his farther progress having fortunately been arrested by a fallen tree—wedged in between chemical box and tent. Apparently there was an end to photography; but, strange to relate, on once more getting the brute on his legs, we found, thanks to the method of packing I had adopted, no damage whatever had been sustained.

On Hayes going for the head of the stag, he found it had been carried off by a bear, but ultimately discovered it in a condition little the worse, though it had been dragged some distance. On reaching the bottom of the gulch, he saw fresh bear—"sign" about the carcass, which determined me to lie in wait after sunset. Though I did so for several nights till some time after the moon rose, the bear, while he never failed to visit the carcass nightly, did not put in an appearance while I was there, afterwards sufficiently explained by our finding his trail leading into a small gulch I had to cross to reach my hiding-place; getting the taint, he doubtless turned back and postponed his meal till nearer morning. On returning three weeks afterwards, nothing but portions of the skin and bones remained, though, from the footprints about being all of one size, it appeared there had been but one bear coming to it.

CHAPTER VII.

PLATES IX. AND X.

A parched country—Wilkinson finds the fresh trail of Indians—Move camp to the Eagle—Again strike Indian trail—Trout-fishing in the Eagle River—Campers—Have driven game out of the district—Blacktail—Death of three bucks—Leadville—Reckless slaughter of big game—Feeling arising against it in America—Photograph a beaver dam—The apparatus comes to grief—Hayes leaves for Breckenridge—Billy dismissed—We return to the Piney Range.

THE few days spent on the Piney River were devoid of interest. The country around was so dry and parched from the long spell of hot weather, wapiti and blacktail had deserted it. It looked, in places, very likely ground for bighorn, but though we devoted two days to searching for them, we only found tracks several weeks old. On the 14th, while I spent the day photographing and fishing in the Piney, Wilkinson rode to some distant rocky bluffs in the hope of finding sheep—"sign," where he thought they would be, if anywhere in the country. About two and a half miles from camp he came on tracks fresh enough, but they were those of a large band of Uté Indians, not of the mountain sheep he was in quest of. Riding quickly on their trail to the top of the nearest mountain, he saw them in the distance; "did not know if they had seen him, but as they had crossed our trail, we were certain to be visited by them on the morrow." As only a very few of the Uté tribes were hostile, and believing these to be a friendly tribe, on their way from Colorado Springs to White River Reservation, I felt pleased at the prospect of meeting them, with the opportunity it would afford me of photographing an Indian "outfit." My men, however, took a very different view of matters. Hayes and Billy were urgent we should hurry back to the Piney. Wilkinson, while he saw no danger in remaining, warned me they would insist on a "big feed," which stores and larder were not in a position to afford. Little did we know at the time the peril we were in. Weeks afterwards we learned, as will later on appear, that the Indians whom Wilkinson had seen were part of a hostile tribe which had only a few days before committed a cold-blooded murder, and were, at the very time, being hotly pursued by an armed force of whites from Colorado Springs.

On the 16th we moved camp to the Eagle River. For fifteen miles we marched over a sterile and uninteresting country, covered with sage brush, which rasped unpleasantly against the leather-covered stirrups of our Mexican saddles, without seeing a head of game of any



BLACK-TAIL.

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description, and late in the evening pitched camp on the banks of the Eagle. The following morning, as we went on another unsuccessful hunt to some great granite bluffs after bighorn, we came, at about a mile from camp, on the tracks of the Utés, where they had evidently been going at a great pace; and as these showed the ponies were without shoes, the whites—who, as we afterwards learned were following on their trail—had not passed, but were then very near at hand. The excellent report my guide had given of the trout-fishing to be had in the Eagle River was fully confirmed by the short experience I had of it. It was simply the very perfection of a troutng stream. Its waters, clear as crystal, were at this season confined to the middle of the channel, where from gravel banks the angler could, free from trees, fish its swirling pools and broad stretches of water; and then its trout, what unsophisticated speckled beauties they were, running from a half to three pounds—and how greedily and fearlessly they took! The bigger the fish, the keener he came, for had not he and his ancestors lived in blissful ignorance of the angler and his lures? Here one fly was as good as another. With only a red palmer I killed in a couple of hours as many as I could comfortably carry. As I crossed a sand-bank one evening I was startled by seeing the fresh print of an American boot. At last the Eagle had been found out; the ever-advancing *wave* of white settlers had reached its banks. Already the pot-hunter was at work in its pools and “placer”—mining would soon do the rest, converting its pure waters into a stream of liquid mud.

As we next morning moved camp a few miles up-stream, we met four “campers,” rough-looking men, who told us they were out prospecting for silver; with which they combined fishing and hunting for the Leadville market. They had, the day before, sent off 2000 pounds of trout, which they would sell for 50 cents a pound. Elk, they said, had not yet come down from timber-line. They had killed but one young stag, at a salt-lick; no; they had not been hunting in the mountains. As we left them I expressed my fears to Wilkinson, lest we had been forestalled. For if, as they asserted, they had not been on the mountains, how did they know the wapiti had not yet begun to come down? While he agreed with me, he thought there was just a chance they might not have penetrated to the grand bit of country he had the previous year stumbled on. Forestalled, however, we had been. When three days later we came to hunt it, though fresh “sign” of wapiti was met with at every step, where they had fed and wallowed—showing they must have been there but a few days before in immense numbers, in the two weeks we roamed over its mountains we saw but one solitary stag. These butchers with their Winchester rifles, blazing into every herd they met, as long as it remained in sight, and wounding ten for one they killed, had scared everything, save a few blacktail, out of the country, so admirably adapted for a great elk-preserve. As the latter were now clear of velvet, I stalked and killed three bucks, two of which had unusually fine heads (Plate IX.)

The rapidity with which mining towns occasionally spring into existence is well-nigh incredible. While Wilkinson had, but twelve months before, been exploring the country in which we were now camped, a few men forty miles off, prospecting for silver, had discovered a lode of great richness. The usual rush ensued, and in little over eight months, Leadville, a city with 30,000 inhabitants, three daily newspapers, churches and schools in course of erection, gas, street railways, and water-work companies organised, hotels, theatres, etc., had sprung into existence. Among such a population there are always men too idly inclined to steadily follow mining. These usually take to hunting for the market, and for a brief time, until they have scared everything out of the district, make a good thing of it. They are as a rule bad stalkers

and indifferent shots, wounding numbers of unfortunate animals, which, as they move about, spread alarm amongst the others, and quickly drive them out of the country. But it is late in the season, when the snow lies deep and the wapiti and blacktail band together, that the pot-hunter finds his time and opportunity. Not content with killing as many as he can remove to market, he shoots all he can, leaving numbers to rot on the ground, caring nothing for the suffering inflicted on those which get off wounded. But a few years ago, 300 blacktail got snowed up in a canyon near Breckenridge. A party of hunters went out and shot the whole, not one of which they removed. A strong feeling against such brutality is springing up in settled parts of the country, where concern is felt at the disappearance of the wapiti and bison; in others, where public opinion is unable to make itself felt, and where alone its influence could now be of use, it still goes on unchecked, and unless put a stop to, which is hardly likely, there will, in a few years, be no big game left in America. As we were packing up my wapiti heads, my guide sadly remarked, "These heads will soon be very valuable, for in a few years there will be no elk left in the mountains!"

As it was by this time evident there was no sport to be obtained on the mountains on this side of the Eagle, we decided to return to our old quarters on the Piney Range. I had noticed, at some little distance from camp, a more than usually interesting beaver dam, but recently constructed, and being anxious to add a photograph of it to my collection, I delayed a day for the purpose of taking it. After seeing the apparatus packed on a pony, and instructing "Billy" where to cross the stream, I went in advance to select the most suitable point of view, and had gone but a short way, when, hearing something like a smash, I turned back to find the pony down in the stream, struggling on the top of the apparatus, "Billy," as usual, standing helplessly on the bank. Instead of crossing where I had ordered him, at an almost level ford, he had chosen a place where there was a perpendicular bank of three to four feet, in trying to get up which the pony had come over, falling heavily on the apparatus. Wilkinson and Hayes, who had also heard the crash, soon appeared on the scene. With their assistance it was speedily got ashore and unpacked, when we found the following rather serious damages had been sustained:—silver bath smashed to atoms, dipper broken in two places, and tent stove in. Lenses were nowhere to be found, but were ultimately fished up from the bottom of a pool some way down the stream. This was a pretty heavy bill. Fortunately I had a spare bath, and after devoting some hours to repairs of dipper and tent, the apparatus was once more got into working order. Next morning I succeeded in getting a fair picture of the dam, and same afternoon we returned to our former camping ground on the Eagle.

Our stores having now run pretty low, and the nearest and easiest route to Breckenridge lying for some way up the Eagle River, we resolved to send Hayes in with the wapiti and blacktail heads, which were a great encumbrance on the march, and to bring out a fresh supply of provisions. As "Billy" had been found perfectly useless, I embraced the opportunity to give him his dismissal, and instructed Hayes to look out for a more suitable man in his place. As, by this arrangement, Wilkinson and I would return to the Piney Range alone, and therefore desirable we should have as few impedimenta as possible, my tent was pitched on a secluded spot in a ravine, and everything not absolutely wanted by us during the next ten days carefully stowed away in it—the whole, with two haunches of venison we left hanging on a tree for his use, to be picked up and brought on to the Piney by Hayes on his return. So soon as we had seen him fairly started on his way we marched back to the Piney, which, after three days of weary monotonous marches, we reached without mishap on the afternoon of the 29th September.

X.



BEAVER DAM.

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A welcome sound—W
four herds of w
good stag—His
measurements.

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CHAPTER VIII.

PLATES XI. XII. AND XIII.

A welcome sound—Weather unsuitable for hunting—Death of a stag—Advantage of firing but one shot—Get close to four herds of wapiti—“The great head”—Successful stalk of another stag—After “the great head”—Come on a good stag—His death—Combat between “the great head” and another stag—Bag both combatants—Their measurements.

If it be true, as has been remarked in regard to the ordinary affairs of life, “it is the unexpected which always happens,” it is so, emphatically, in regard to the hunting of wild animals. The great expectations with which we had started for the Eagle, had ended in my not even getting a shot at a wapiti. Now, when back in the country, where we had been fairly successful—though from the careful way I had shot it, it had been but little disturbed, and had had more than a fortnight of entire rest—there appeared little hope we should find it anything like so good now. Somewhat cast down at our recent ill-luck, I had, as we chatted over the camp fire, been expressing myself in this sense to Wilkinson, when he asked me if I had heard nothing. On my replying I had not, he told me to listen attentively, and I soon would. But a few minutes had passed, when, from a wood to the south, I heard the faint but unmistakable bellow of a wapiti stag, immediately answered from a wood more to the right. He then informed me it was in these very woods he had, the year before, found wapiti so plentiful, and had seen the great head, he was so anxious I should get. Most likely these were the very same herds, come down in our absence, and the chances very much in favour of our finding the monster head among them.

The weather at this time was most unsuitable for hunting; bright and clear, with a high wind. Not only was it difficult, from the dryness of the ground, to track a wapiti any distance, but impossible to say whether the trail was an hour or days old; while the game, to be sheltered from the hot sun, kept during the day to the thickest parts of the wood, where, except when at close quarters, the rustling of the foliage prevented our hearing the bellow of the stags. A few days of rain would have been most welcome. The deer would then have come out in the daytime to feed, and we should have had a good chance of meeting some of the grizzlies, whose tracks in the vicinity of camp showed they were by no means scarce. There was, however, no prospect of

an early change, and nothing for it but to make the most of such weather as we had, devoting ourselves to wapiti and blacktail, and leaving the grizzlies till snow fell, and we could track them up. While the ponies were as a rule picketed, the donkeys were left to roam at will about camp. It seemed strange, none of these should ever have been carried off by a bear or a mountain lion. Bears, however, appear rarely, if ever, to kill for themselves; and the puma, with abundance of blacktail to prey upon, probably concluded it wiser to give our camp a wide berth in his nocturnal rambles.

We started early the following morning, and stole cautiously along the edge of the wood, in the direction from which the bellow had appeared to come the previous night, till we reached a gulch, between which and a great ravine lying beyond there intervened a forest, at this point about a quarter of a mile in breadth, and open in places, where a severe storm had left the ground strewn with fallen timber. Running east and west for five miles, it became wider and denser as it sloped down to the Piney River, forming, from its extent and thick undergrowth, an admirable covert for game. We had barely entered this wood—with less care perhaps than we ought to have taken—when a herd of wapiti, that had been lying in a thick part of it, got up. As they retired, a stag with very long and wide antlers, evidently the lord of the herd, turning to look at 130 yards' distance, I let him have it behind the shoulder, but rather high. He moved slowly after the others, until, getting into fallen timber, he could go no farther, when a second ball finished him. He measured as follows:—

Height at withers	16 hands $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch.
Length from tail to nose	8 feet 7 inches.
Girth round heart	6 feet 2 inches.
Length of antlers	59 and $59\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
Span inside beam	50 inches.
Points	13
Girth round burr	13 inches.
Do. above do.	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Before the herd got out of range and went down the great ravine I could have had two other chances at very fair stags, but being in search of fine heads, and therefore averse from disturbing them more than we could help, I did not avail myself of them. Undoubtedly this policy was a good one. By steadily following it, the herds were not scared out of the district, and we succeeded before we were done with it, in getting most of the best heads; at least, after I had given up hunting wapiti, having procured as many as I wanted, we saw no stags with the herds equal to those I had killed.

On looking down the ravine under cover of some young spruces, we saw them moving along the bottom, stopping now and again to feed. As we lay watching them, there came a loud bellow from a strip of wood not more than 300 yards below us, immediately answered lower down the gulch. A few seconds later, a third stag joined in, and for a time they kept up a very pretty chorus. Here were no less than four herds, within about as many hundred yards of us. Save a yearling, which showed himself for a moment, I could see nothing. A strip of aspens led in a slanting direction, to within 200 yards of the wood below. Intensely absorbed in watching the latter, and in studying how best to get at the stag, which, from his bellow, I felt certain was an unusually large one, I now, as I turned to carry out the good old stalking rule, of getting as near as you safely can to your game, and then patiently waiting for the chance—



OUR HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS.

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which is sure, sooner or later, to come—of opening him up, missed my guide. Thinking he had gone back to gralloch the stag that had been killed, I stalked down alone, and found him, to my surprise, at the end of the cover. He had whispered to me to follow him, but, absorbed as I was, I had failed to hear him. It seemed I had missed a fine chance; an enormous stag had, only a few minutes before, chased three others into the open, and after standing broadside on for a short time, had retired into the wood. A little later, he again showed himself, but not near enough for me to risk a shot. The whole herd then moved down the gulch, and were lost to view in a strip of wood, which extended some way up the other side. We now heard a stag bellow lower down the gulch on our right, at once answered by the one we had been watching, but whether from below, or from the opposite side—for which, when we last saw them, they appeared to be heading—it was difficult to say. Feeling sure the herd was still below us, and I could get within shot, I was anxious to move down at once, but Wilkinson, believing that they had crossed, so strongly advised we should quietly remain where we were, I unfortunately, very much against my own judgment, yielded the point. After an hour wasted in this way, I had the mortification to see them cross the stream and move into the wood on the other side. As they appeared in an open space, a great stag came down to meet them. We expected a fight, but after a few mild rounds, apparently to measure each other's strength, we again lost sight of them in the wood; not, however, before a very satisfactory discovery had been made. In this stag Wilkinson had, with the aid of my telescope, recognised the monster he had seen the year before. When we next saw them, the two herds were making their way round the shoulder of the hill. Soon as the last of them had gone out of sight, we followed, but lost them in a wood of young aspens, where, as we could not see five yards in front of us, it would have been most unwise to go after them.

On our return, we found the herd we had left on our right as we crossed, scattered feeding over the face of the gulch opposite. On our side the ground was steep, and difficult in one place from the want of cover, save such as was afforded by stunted briars and fallen timber. While I was considering how best to approach them, and unable to see how, should he feed uphill, even if we succeeded in reaching the bottom unseen, we were to get at the stag I wanted, he lay down under a large tree close to a small stag, which lay with his head turned in our direction. Anxious to get within shot before he again rose, I stalked down at once. For a time it was easy enough. Under cover of a wood of young quaking-aspens we moved rapidly down to the fallen timber. Here the real difficulty of the stalk began. But 300 yards from a herd of thirty stags and hinds, with the barest of cover to screen us, we had, stopping, every now and again, while the young stag looked in our direction, to slide down flat on our backs, under or round the fallen timber, till at last, with a sense of relief, this ugly bit of ground was got over and a clump of aspens reached. Finding, from the bareness of the ground beyond, it would be incurring too great a risk to advance farther, and the distance being, as near as I could judge, 200 yards, I decided to take him as he rose. It was one of those positions in which it is exceedingly difficult to accurately judge distance. My guide thought it was not more than 120 yards. Feeling as I aimed at the stag that it could not be under 200 yards, I put up the 200 yard sight and aimed, if anything, rather low for the heart. He staggered for a moment, and rolled down the hill, dead. His antlers, carrying 12 points, are not remarkable for length, measuring only 49 and 50 inches, with a span of $42\frac{1}{2}$ inches, but are of great thickness, being $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the burr, and 11 inches above it.

The following day, the 3d of October, we started early, with the view of hunting up the big stag whose grand head I was now determined should be mine, even if it cost me some weeks of labour to secure. As we crossed the forest, which lay between the gulch and great ravine, and approached the fallen timber, where the wapiti I had first killed the day before was lying, a stag with a remarkably good head of twelve points entered from the other side and passed at about 150 yards from where we stood. Slipping behind a tree, I broke a dry stick to make him stop, and as he stood for a moment to listen, giving me the shoulder-shot, I succeeded in getting a ball well into him, quickly followed by another, which, going through the heart, brought him down at once. Though not of great length or thickness of beam, being only 49 and 50 inches, $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the burr, and but $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches above it, the antlers, from their shape, symmetry, and the great length of the tines, are perhaps as striking as any in my collection.

Before crossing the great ravine to ascend the mountain, where we had last seen the great head, we crept to the edge of the wood, with the intention of thoroughly examining the terrace-like slopes on its opposite face. It has been my lot, in the hunting of big game in India and elsewhere, to suddenly come on scenes of thrilling interest to a sportsman, but rarely have I felt such wild excitement, fully shared in by my guide, as was caused by the sight which now met our view.

At but half a mile's distance—though in the clear atmosphere it looked much nearer—on a bare terrace, well up the mountain which faced us, two large stags, one of them the great head I was so eager again to meet, were engaged in mortal combat, while at but fifteen paces from them stood a group of admiring hinds. As they separated and again furiously rushed at each other, we could distinctly hear the clashing of their horns as they met. For a time it was hard to say which would have the best of it. The great head was smaller in body, but he had the advantage, which he strove to maintain, of being on slightly higher ground. As I watched them through the telescope, every muscle seemed strained, as each exerted his whole strength to push his adversary back. For a time scarcely an inch of ground was lost by either, but in the long-run weight of body was sure to tell. At last the bigger-bodied animal, as they separated, sprang to one side, and coming with a great rush from a position more nearly level, forced his rival back, and fairly drove him off the ground. Exhausted, and apparently sorely punished, he slowly retreated uphill and disappeared over the sky-line, while his antagonist and the hinds lay down close to some spruce-trees.¹

As the head of the latter was an unusually fine one, I decided to stalk *him* first, and spend the rest of the day hunting up the other. There were but two ways to get at him. The first—namely, to go back under cover of the wood, go round the mountain at the head of the gulch, and then work our way down from above—presented no difficulties, either as regarded wind or want of cover; but the distance to be traversed was so great, we could hardly expect to reach them before sunset, when, in all likelihood, we should find they had gone to the feeding-grounds below. The second—to go down to the bottom of the gulch and work our way up the stream until we reached the terrace above them—was more difficult. We should have, through snow, to cross at least one bare place, in full view; the wind, though light and seemingly steady

¹ During this combat I observed a difference in the mode of fighting between the wapiti and the red-deer of the Highlands. The former every now and again separated and furiously rushed at each other, more after the manner of rams; while the latter, in such fights as I have seen, appeared only to push backwards and forwards with great force, their heads locked together as if trying to bore in on each other.

enough as it blew straight up the ravine, can never be trusted in such ground, and I dreaded its carrying the taint to where the deer lay, as it circled round after striking the head of the gulch. There is nothing a stalker so much dreads as that a stag, on whose grand head he has set his heart, should get his "wind," for nothing is so certain to scare him out of the country. A *sight* of him will create alarm for a time, but he soon gets over it, and though I have often enough succeeded in again coming up with deer which had seen me, I cannot recall a single instance of my ever in the same day being able to do so, when they had got my wind. I was, therefore, most averse from running the risk of for ever losing sight of the two splendid wapiti we were now hunting. My guide was, however, confident that the wind, after striking the head of the gulch, would pass clear above them, and as no other way lay open, there was nothing for it but to make the attempt.

To reach unseen a belt of trees lying below us, as shown in the photograph "Our happy hunting-grounds," was easy enough. Once there, the great difficulty of the stalk faced us. It seemed impossible, without alarming the wapiti above, to get over the next piece of ground covered with snow, and with only here and there a few willows, now bare of leaf, to cover us. A happy thought struck me. Stooping low, while my guide did the same, I told him to keep his head in close contact with my back, in order that, as we slowly crossed, we might—our clothes being somewhat of the colour—pass at the distance for a wapiti hind. I then slowly moved across, stopping at times, and bending low as if feeding. Once a suspicious hind rose and looked, but as I, the forequarters, appeared quietly grazing, she soon lay down again. It was an anxious time, but the ruse proved successful. In a few minutes we were safely out of sight, and after much sliding, tumbling, and barking of our shins, succeeded in reaching the stream at the bottom of the ravine. For the next two hours and a half we toiled up its slippery bed of mud and shale, constantly stumbling and falling, until the head of the gulch was reached, where, to my relief, I found the wind blowing all right, and the wapiti still lying in the same position. Nothing now remained but a walk of a few hundred yards along the terrace above them, a crawl of a few yards more to its edge, and to take the stag when he rose to feed. I lay for a time watching them. This is ever the most enjoyable part of a stalk; not only is there a sweet satisfaction at its difficulties surmounted, but an indescribable charm in observing a fine herd of deer moving about within easy range, in no small degree heightened if the stalk has been, as in the present case, a difficult and laborious one, and the stag such a specimen of his genus as the one now lying, unconscious of danger, but eighty yards from my rifle. I had not long to wait. Suddenly, as if aware of the approach of a rival, he rose and looked across the gulch. I at once aimed at his heart, but made a wretched shot, striking him too far forward; bringing him down, however, with my second barrel, as he made an attempt to follow the hinds. My guide, who had remained behind, now joined me, and as we were anxious to get on the trail of the great head, the gralloching was at once proceeded with. Afraid lest my shots might have scared him, or that he might have seen the hinds and followed them, I was expressing my fears to Wilkinson as to our ever falling in with him again, when, to our surprise, we saw him, in, for us, happy ignorance of the fate of his rival,—what a chance for him if he had known of it!—coming over the highest ridge above us. As he was moving down-wind, and would, unless we made all haste, soon be in ours, we raced under cover of the ridge to head him. Wilkinson's wind was better than mine, and getting in front, he nearly spoiled the whole business by letting the stag "get" him. He at once fired. The next moment, as the stag was tearing down the gulch, with his side

exposed, I let drive, and speedily had the satisfaction to see him pitch on his head among some fallen timber. And so, with but little trouble after all, the great head, which Wilkinson had truly described as "worth going all the way to obtain," was mine. My one regret was, he had not given me a deal more. As I look at his head now, I should like to feel some great, difficult, and laborious stalk were associated in my mind with those giant antlers.

The following are the measurements, carefully taken at the time, of these two splendid animals:—

	FIRST STAG KILLED.	SECOND STAG KILLED—THE GREAT HEAD.
Height at withers	16½ hands.	... 16 hands.
Length from tail to nose. . . .	8½ feet.	... 8 feet 4 inches.
Girth round heart	6 feet 4 inches.	... 6 feet 1 inch.
Length of antlers	54 and 54½ inches.	... 56 and 59 inches.
Span inside beam	42 inches.	... 51 inches.
Points	12.	... 16.
Girth round burr	12¾ inches.	... 15½ inches.
Do. above do. . . .	11¼ inches.	... 12½ inches.

The day being still young, we crossed the mountain, but for some miles saw nothing. On our way back, late in the afternoon, as we rounded a shoulder of the hill, we came in view of a small herd of wapiti in a wood of young aspens, with one good head among them. Though pretty well done-up after our hard day's work, and with camp a long distance off, the temptation to finish the day with a fourth stag was too strong to be resisted. After an easy stalk, I succeeded in getting within 100 yards of the stag, as he stood close to a thick part of the wood. It did not come off, however; for once my rifle played me false, but as it was the first miss-fire I ever had with it, I could hardly complain. Before I could use the second barrel, with any certainty of stopping him, he was off, crashing through the wood. It had indeed been a red-letter day, and although, to reach camp, we had two stiff mountains to climb, and a rough country to get over, they seemed as nothing while we trudged on in high spirits, talking over our luck in seeing such a fight, and of our wonderful success in getting both combatants. I had had many a successful day's stalking, but, considering the quality of the game killed, none equal to this.



HEAD OF THE VICTOR.

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CHAPTER IX.

PLATE XIV.

Skinning of the heads—A change of weather—Successful trail of a stag in snow—Hear a stag bellow—Follow him—Failure—Last day of wapiti-hunting—A successful stalk without a shot—Two herds—Scene of a desperate encounter—Thickness of skin on neck and foreshoulder—A lively concert—A wapiti drive—Death of my last stag—Average points and measurements of stags killed—Alone in camp—How I baked the bread.

FOR the next few days, owing to high wind, hunting with any prospect of success was almost impossible. As it would have been a pity to disturb good ground uselessly, we left it quiet, and devoted ourselves to skinning the heads of the stags we had lately killed.¹ Thereafter a complete change in the weather took place. It became much colder, with an occasional fall of snow, which quickly disappeared under the hot sun, and from this time forward we were no longer troubled with the high wind which had so often interfered with our sport. I had now secured about as many wapiti heads as I wanted; nevertheless, stags being still in good condition, we decided to have one or two days more at them before we turned our attention to the bears, whose tracks we had so often seen, and which would, soon as the snow began to lie permanently, enable us, with some chance of success, to follow them up. Having already, at some length, described the sort of sport to be obtained among the wapiti of the Rocky Mountains, I shall only give an account of two days more; one of which will, in some respects, be found to differ from the others.

On the first of these days snow had been falling more or less all morning. As we approached the wood, lying between the gulch and great ravine, where I had already been so successful, we came on the fresh trail of a large stag, which led into a thicket of young spruces. On going very cautiously through it, I saw him standing within range in a hollow, only part of his shoulders and heart visible between two large trees, and at once let him have it. He

¹ Wilkinson was an excellent hand at the work. After removing the skin, from which he carefully cut away every bit of muscle and flesh, it was simply allowed to dry. He told me this had been his practice for many years, and he had never known it to fail. I found my skins, when they arrived in this country, in perfect condition.

The heads being, as my guide expressed it, "mean things to pack" on a donkey, constantly getting displaced from the points coming in contact with trees, etc., we were forced to saw them down the middle of the skull and to tie the antlers together. It would hardly have been possible to get them through the forests in any other way. When I came to set up the heads the parts were again joined, and a hole having been drilled right through the skull just under the burr, secured by a strong screw bolt and nut.

walked slowly from us, apparently so sick and faint, we made sure he would soon drop. To our surprise he kept moving, getting better as he went, until, on rounding the head of the gulch, we lost sight of him in the thick wood. For fully two hours we followed as the trail led us, backward and forward in the woods, but as he carefully avoided steep ground and continued at a walk, we knew the end could not be far off. Eventually we came on him as he was going down a small gulch, when a second bullet rolled him over into a stream at its foot, where he lay so firmly jammed between the bank and a fallen tree lying across it, we were, later in the day, forced to hew his head off with an axe. He had a remarkably fine head of 14 points, two of which are palmated, horns 50 and $51\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches round burr, and 11 inches above, with a span of $42\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Having heard, as we followed on the trail of this stag, a bellow in the wood higher up the mountain on our right, we returned to hunt him up. Snow was now descending in thicker flakes, and the chance was, therefore, unless he had remained quiet where he was, or had but recently moved, we should not be able to find him. After a few casts we came on his trail, quite fresh, making straight for the top of the hill. Keeping a sharp look-out ahead, and treading as noiselessly as we could, no time was lost in going after him. On coming out of the wood on the crest, I saw him standing at about 140 yards below us, close to a patch of aspens, evidently alarmed, for he had turned, and was looking in our direction. I slowly raised my rifle to take him in the heart, but the barrels were coated with snow, and I could not see the bead. To brush it off was the work of a second, but before I could aim again, he was on the move, and I made a clean miss as he disappeared in the wood. I had often, in a rather amused sort of way, looked at my guide's rifle, with its bead and back-sight raised more than half an inch from the barrel. The reason was now fully explained. These had been placed high, to enable him to shoot in falling snow without risk of his not being able to see along the barrel.

I now come to our last day's wapiti-hunting. Hearing a stag bellowing in the rear of camp as I came out of my tent in the early morning, I went alone, and had a very pretty stalk at three stags; but as the best of them, though he carried a head of twelve points, was hardly up to the mark, I contented myself with watching them for a time, as they fed in a glade in the forest, within easy range of my rifle, and returned to camp without disturbing them. In my absence Wilkinson had heard a faint bellow in the distance, which seemed to come from the great wood that ran down to the Piney; but from which side of the grassy slope that cut it in two he was unable to say. As it would afterwards save us no small amount of trouble if we could now ascertain in which part of the wood the stag was, we at once went to the top of a hill which overlooked it, about a mile from camp, and had barely reached it when two herds came in view on the sky-line, and fed along the grassy slope. After a time the one entered the wood on the left, while the other kept down-hill, and shortly after disappeared in that on the right. Feeling sure they had taken up their quarters for the day, we hurried back to breakfast.

The snow had now melted, but the day being calm, it was not, on the whole, a bad one for hunting. We began by entering the wood on the left, only to find that the herd we had seen retire into it had changed their quarters to the one on the right. This was a disappointment, for we had calculated on getting the best stag out of it, and then hunting up the others in the afternoon. Here we came on the scene of a desperate encounter, where two stags, evidently well-matched, had but recently had it out. Young spruce-trees, as thick as a man's arm, lay torn up by the roots, and, for a space of some thirty feet square, scarcely a blade of grass or twig



WAPITI HEAD, WITH TWO PALMATED BRANCHES.

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had been left standing. We thought we could see how it had ended. One of the stags had evidently been forced back with great violence into a thicket, and been cruelly punished before he got away from his rival, but neither here, nor on any other part of the ground, though tufts of hair lay all about, did we find a trace of blood. The whole scene told a tale of a combat so prolonged and furious that I was anxious to learn from it as much as I could. Armed with such formidable antlers and possessing great strength of body, it seemed impossible that either could have come out of a fight of the kind without being seriously wounded. Nature, however, while furnishing the wapiti with those immense antlers, has also supplied him about the neck and fore part of the shoulders with a hide so thick and tough as to be capable of resisting the thrust of the sharpest antler. I have in my possession a piece of skin taken from the neck where it joins the shoulder, which, dried and shrunk as it is, still measures three-fourths of an inch in thickness, and is as hard as a piece of rhinoceros hide. Though no wound could be found on the outside of the great head or that of his antagonist when we skinned them, we yet found they were both much bruised underneath, showing that stags in these encounters do not escape injury to the extent which some, misled by the absence of external wounds, have supposed, and have even gone the length of asserting, that, unlike their European congener, they never engage in combat at all.

As we crossed the grassy slope we heard stags bellowing in two different places, but, owing to the density of the wood, we found it hopeless to try and approach them without being seen or heard. My only chance appeared to be to wait till evening, when they might possibly come out to feed, or to send my guide round to drive them towards me by giving them his wind. The first had so invariably resulted in failure, and would, moreover, detain us for so many hours, I decided on the drive. A pretty lively concert was at this time going on. No sooner did one stag utter his note of defiance, than it was immediately replied to by the one below him. With but little heart for the work, for driving has never been a style of sport I much cared for, I took up a position half-way down the grassy slope, facing the wood, and about 120 yards from it, which commanded the points where either herd might be expected to break cover. Wilkinson had been gone but little more than half an hour, when the stag in the upper part of the wood ceased bellowing. Evidently they had got his wind, but, as so often happens in driving, they did not come the way they were wanted. The one lower down kept bellowing for some time longer, then suddenly stopped; all at once there was a sound of breaking sticks, and a lot of hinds appeared, coming straight for where I lay. Keeping close to the ground, I let them pass within six yards of me; then came three stags, with fairly good heads, but none of them being just such as I wanted, I still lay quiet. I began to think all was over, when again there was a rustling, and a much better stag appeared. As he stood for a moment in the open, giving me a splendid chance, I let him have the contents of both barrels behind the shoulder, which at once rolled him over.

His measurements were:—

Height at withers	15 hands 3 inches.
Length from tail to nose	8 feet
Girth round heart	5 feet 11 inches.
Length of antlers	49½ and 51 inches.
Span	47½ inches.
Points	12
Girth round burr	11½ inches.
Girth above burr	10 inches.

The sixteen heads killed during the trip averaged as follows:—

I only measured the bodies of eight stags. These averaged:—

The measurement of height was taken with the pastern joint, bent as it is when the animal is standing. I give it for what it is worth; but of course it does not show with perfect accuracy the height of the animal as he stood in life.

I much regretted we had no means of weighing these stags. As near as we could roughly guess, their average weight was not, I believe, much under 1000 pounds, or about 70 stones. Caton mentions a stag he kept in his park, which, at three years old, weighed 650 pounds. At five he stood 16 hands at the withers. In that year, one of his legs having been broken, he had to be destroyed. The butcher who dressed him estimated he would weigh 900 pounds live weight. Caton adds, "As the elk grows till he is eight or nine years old, had the elk we are writing about lived his full age, I think he would have attained to the weight of ten or eleven hundred pounds."

It is cheerless work in many ways, especially when hard worked, to be alone in camp as we were at this time, with no camp fire to go to as we returned cold and worn out; to have to collect firewood, make one's own fire, water and picket the ponies for the night. While Wilkinson cooked the venison and made tea, I washed the plates, knives, and forks, and baked the bread, which I did in this way. I first placed the Dutch oven lid on the fire, and on top of it the oven; while it was being heated, I mixed well together in a tin basin two pints of flour, two tea-spoonfuls of baking powder, and a little salt. I then added a little water and well kneaded the whole, greased the oven with a bit of bacon, and placed in it the dough. A quantity of red-hot cinders having been drawn out, the oven was placed on them, the lid put on, and on it as many red-hot cinders as it could carry. So soon as it admitted of a knife being stuck in, and taken out with no dough adhering to it, our loaf was ready for the table. The above, with soup made by boiling one of the Julienne cakes brought from England, and the venison which Wilkinson had by this time cooked, constituted our frugal meal. To it, however, we brought most excellent appetites, and, I venture to say, enjoyed it more than one usually does an elaborate repast in civilised life.

CHAPTER X.

PLATE XV.

We run out of provisions—Hayes's return—Alarming news—Murder by Indians—A narrow escape—A bear had entered my tent and stolen the butter—Unsuccessful attempt at tracking a bear—Lie in wait after sunset—A clean miss—Two other attempts to bag a bear after sunset end in disappointment.

TWELVE days had now passed since Hayes left us. Expecting him to return on the tenth, or at latest on the eleventh day, the supplies we had brought to serve us during his absence were now reduced to the last loaf. We were in consequence driven to return, on the morning of the thirteenth day, to where I had left my tent and surplus stores, a ride of some twenty miles. Fortunately, as it turned out, we had not far to go. As we rode over the crest of a high hill, and came in view of our old camping-ground on the Piney river, where we had at first seen the trail of the Indians, we saw in the distance a donkey train coming down the mountain beyond. Presently it halted, and through the telescope I saw Hayes stedfastly regarding us. His news was somewhat startling. As he approached with the air of one who had something of importance to communicate, he said he had at first taken us for Indians; telling me—as he observed a smile on my face, and handed me a newspaper—to read that, when I should see what a narrow escape we had made when the Utés were so near us on the Piney. "There had," he said, "been an Indian rising—our friends at Hall's Gulch and Montezuma had been in great anxiety about us." J—, in his letter, described what a relief it had been to him when Hayes arrived. "Had he only known where we were to be found, he would have sent a special messenger to bring us back at once." How fortunate it was he did not!

The story, so far as I was able to pick up the details from Hayes's confused narrative—for the paper only gave an account of the pursuit by the whites—appeared to be this. About 100 of the Utés, under Piah and Colorow's son, two unfriendly chiefs, had been to Denver, where, in spite of its being a penitentiary offence to sell or give it to them, they had managed to get hold of a quantity of whiskey. On their way back to the Indian Reservation on White River, they came to a place near Hot Sulphur Springs, which had in

former days been a favourite camping-ground of the tribe. Finding it now the ranche of a white man, they began by demanding 200 dollars as compensation. On this being refused, they proceeded to tear down the fences, threatening to kill him if he said a word. After doing a deal of damage, they proceeded to their favourite amusement of horse-racing. Meanwhile, an express having been sent to the nearest settlement for assistance, ten whites, fully armed, arrived, and getting up unperceived by the Indians, succeeded in obtaining possession of their arms, which lay piled on the bank of a creek. Placed at the mercy of the whites, the Utés consented to retire quietly. One of the last to leave, who had never parted with his arms, was Colorow's son. While the parley had been going on, a white, nicknamed "Bighorn," had been fancying he recognised in this Uté an Indian with whom he had had on one occasion a very violent quarrel. He was now to be relieved of all doubt on the matter. Young Colorow, quickly raising his rifle to shoot him, said insultingly, "Ah, you Bighorn!" But Bighorn was the quicker of the two; the next moment the Indian, shot through the heart, fell dead from his saddle. The Indian idea of justice, in a case like this, is simply a life for a life, regardless of the innocence or guilt of the individual whose life is to be taken in satisfaction. No use attempting to argue with them on the injustice of such an act. A victim was but too soon found. On crossing Middle Park the Utés came to a ranche occupied by an old man named Elliot, much respected by all who knew him, and as he stood at his door unarmed, they murdered him in cold blood. Wilkinson had for many years been intimate with him, and was greatly concerned at his old friend's untimely end. The band had, thereafter, made all haste to get back to White River. It was their ponies Wilkinson had seen on the Piney, the very Indians I had been so anxious to photograph, and whose trail I afterwards crossed within two and a half miles of our camp on the Eagle. He was now certain they had seen him, and taking him for one of the scouts of the force in pursuit, had made off with all the haste they could.

How the matter might have ended had they come to our camp under such circumstances, it is impossible to say. Whether, the required satisfaction obtained, and laying claim, as they do, to the game of the country as their property, which the white man has no right to kill, they would, as old Colorow once did when he found Wilkinson in camp with a number of heads, have demanded "fifteen dollars for each," and told us to "take two sleeps and clear out of the country;" or whether, infuriated at the death of their chief's son, and regardless of consequences (so characteristic of savages), we should have been murdered like poor Elliot, was, fortunately for us, not left to the decision of this band of hostile Utés. This was Hayes's "Indian rising." The whole of the Uté tribes have this season been on the war-path. They began by murdering the agent on White River Reservation, and had, according to latest accounts, succeeded in drawing the troops first sent against them into an ambuscade, and killing the whole of them.

On going to pack up my tent, photographic apparatus, etc., which, as before mentioned, had been left in a secluded spot close to the Eagle, Hayes found it had had a visitor in his absence. A bear, attracted probably by the two haunches of venison we had left hanging on a tree, had made two huge rents in the tent, but finding the smell of collodion not to his liking, he had contented himself with only abstracting the butter, all of which, with the two haunches, was gone.

After removing the heads, and such meat as we required, from the wapiti lately killed, the



VIEW FROM CAMP ON THE PINERY.

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carcasses had been left in the hope that the keen noses of some of the grizzlies, whose tracks we had seen about camp, might find them out; which would, when the ground became sufficiently covered with snow, enable me to get on their trail and track them to where, after their nocturnal feed, they laid up in the woods for the day. As bad luck would have it, we had at this time a week of bright clear weather; just the thing for photography, but ill-suited for bringing about the longed-for interview with the grizzly, whose skin, if hard work and perseverance would do it, I was now determined should form one of my Rocky Mountains trophies.

Some two weeks before this I had killed a fine blacktail buck, and the camp being at the time well supplied with venison, we had, after gralloching, hung the carcass on a tree. Having little else to do one forenoon, we went with the ponies to bring it into camp. There had been a light fall of snow during the night, which had left the ground covered to the depth of an inch; but the day was now bright and clear. After less than an hour's absence, as we were returning with the buck, and had come within 200 yards of camp, Wilkinson suddenly stopped, and in silence pointed to the tracks of a bear, made since we left. He had come out of the wood, stood on his hind legs on seeing the tents, and gone back as he came. Not a moment was lost in hitching our ponies to the nearest tree, and following on his trail. As he was going straight down wind, I from the first felt it was hopeless. There was just a chance, however, he might have diverged to the right or left. A little farther on we came to a spot where he had been digging for roots, and had afterwards lain down. We now knew we must be near him, but as the wind blew on our backs, and he still held straight on, our prospect of coming on him appeared more hopeless than ever. A few minutes later we came to a small opening, on the other side of which lay a barrier of fallen trees piled over each other to a height of four feet or so. In the centre of the opening the taint had reached him. For an instant he had turned, and then gone at full speed over the fallen trees. It was a disappointment, but we had come nearer success, and that was something.

The sprinkling of snow soon melted, and there being no appearance of a storm, we in the afternoon went the round of the carcasses, to ascertain if bear were "using" them. The two nearest to camp were untouched, but a bear, evidently, from his tracks, of unusually large size, had been to the third; and, as the evening was close at hand, I determined to lie in wait for his return. The position of the carcass, which he had carefully covered up with earth and turf, was well suited for the purpose. It lay on the edge of a wood of young spruces, through which the trail showed the bear had lately been in the habit of coming to it. Facing this wood, and very gently sloping upwards for a short distance, was an open space studded with quaking aspens, now stripped of their foliage, the ground well covered with long dry grass about a foot in height. On its right lay the great Piney gulch, at but thirty paces from the spot I had chosen as my hiding-place; and, as there was nothing between its edge and the horizon beyond, an animal coming up the gulch from that side would, as he came over the top, and stood on the sky-line, be an easy mark at such a short distance. On that side, however, we did not expect him, since he had evidently been in the habit of coming through the wood that faced us. I had chosen a position about twenty-five paces from the carcass, close to an aspen, one of the lower branches of which afforded a good rest for my rifle, while Wilkinson lay by my side on the right. It was a beautiful calm evening, not a sound of any kind to be heard. I had been admiring the magnificent sunset, with its varied changes of colour, and wondering at the total silence of animal and insect life, until the

shades of evening had so deepened, I began to fear I should be unable, if the bear came, to see his body against the dark green of the wood with sufficient clearness to make a certainty of lodging a bullet in the heart. I had for a few minutes been aiming at the dead stag, when Wilkinson said in a low whisper, "I hear something—it is only a chipmonk, but it is *alarmed*." The next instant a huge animal, looking, doubtless, larger in the twilight than he really was, stood at but thirty paces from us on the right. Instead of taking his usual route, he had come up the gulch, and was now standing on the sky-line, his whole side exposed, perfectly still and intently listening. I saw I could not expect a better chance, and as slowly as I could, to prevent his seeing any motion, turned to take him, while, inch by inch, the rifle was raised to get clear of the tree. Just as I had got it level with the trunk, and was about to bring the muzzle down, the bear turned his head towards us, and for a few minutes, during which I remained perfectly still, appeared to be steadily regarding us. When he again turned, I slowly lowered the rifle, until I had it, as nearly as I could judge in the dim light, level with the heart, and pulled the trigger. But the furious growls uttered by a bear, when first hit, did not follow the shot. Unable to see for the smoke which enveloped us, Wilkinson, thinking he must have fallen dead on the spot, sprang to his feet, only to find the bear gone, and that I had made a clean miss at thirty paces! The whole thing was inexplicable. Fully alive to the danger of only wounding him, I had resolved not to fire unless I could see the bead against where the heart lay. This I had done, and had never been more steady. The explanation was, however, simple enough. Next day we found the bullet had struck a branch of an aspen, either burst there and then, or been deflected. It was a cruel disappointment; but he had only been scared, not wounded, and the chances, therefore, lay very much in our favour, we should yet again fall in with him after a good fall of snow, when I vowed he would not escape me so easily.

We next went to have a look at the carcasses of the "big head" and his rival, which lay within 300 yards of each other, on the far side of the great ravine. Bears having been to both, we went back in the evening, and lay in wait behind a fallen tree, not more than twenty yards from the carcass which lay highest up. Some time after sundown, no bear having appeared, my guide slipped down to the other, and quickly returned to tell me to come, for "there was a bear tearing at it like mad." It had now become so dark, it was difficult to make anything out in front; I could just see at the spot where the body of the stag lay a dark object every now and again get on its hind-legs and drop out of sight. As it appeared to stand up at regular intervals, I tried how many I could count between each; then, as soon as he had gone down, I hurried on till I had counted half the number, and dropped down behind a fallen tree till he again appeared and went out of sight. I had by this plan got on unperceived to within sixty yards, when as I was in the act, after seeing him go down, of stepping over a fallen tree, Wilkinson trod on a withered branch at my back. The bear was on his legs in an instant, and the next moment in full retreat up the hill. We saw him in the moonlight stop and look at us, but too far off for a sure shot. When we next day came up the ravine, on our trail of the previous evening, we found his tracks on the top of ours all the way down. Having satisfied himself the coast was clear, he no doubt returned to finish his meal. This fresh miscarriage did not much dishearten me. It was something to be seeing them, to know they were there, and that, when snow once covered the ground to the depth of a few inches, I should, sooner or later, get a fair shot in daylight, when it would be my own fault if success did not crown my efforts.

Wilkinson had a small black setter puppy, eight months old, named from its colour "Coaly." She was too young to be of any use, but he was anxious to take her with him, to let her see game, and as she was very obedient, keeping close to heel when ordered, and in no way interfered with my sport, she had been allowed to accompany us when hunting wapiti and blacktail. Two days after our last failure, as we returned from a very successful hunt after blacktail, and crossed the wood, which, as already described, lay between the gulch and big ravine, we went to have another look at the two carcasses lying in it. The first lay as we had left it, but the other had been carefully covered up, and the tracks on the soft earth about were either those of the big bear I had missed or of one as large. As the sun was going down and he might return at any moment, we at once rode back, left our ponies behind a thicket, and returned with as little delay as possible. Three young spruce-trees, growing close together within eight yards of the carcass and to the leeward of it, afforded good cover. The bear's tracks showed he had come and gone through the thick wood directly facing us. The wind was steady, and there being on this occasion no friendly branch in the way, he had but to come down his usual path, when a bullet through the head, or heart, would end a very successful day's work. But our bear was not to be bagged in this simple fashion. He was a deal too astute for that. About the same hour as he had before appeared, the setter, "Coaly," as she lay at my side, looked back and uttered a low growl. There was a sound of breaking sticks about a hundred yards in our rear, and we knew that—the bear having taken the precaution to go round for the wind before approaching the carcass—"the lying-in-wait business" had once more resulted in failure. Neither of us had had any experience in it, and cared less for it. We now vowed we should give it up for good, and patiently wait for the storm, which the intense cold and the heavy bank of clouds gathering on the horizon showed was not far distant.

CHAPTER XI.

PLATES XVI. AND XVII.

A skunk—A bear has been “using”—We get on his trail—I “come to grief”—A bear’s curiosity—My first grizzly—Trail another bear—Forced to give it up—Photograph and skin the bear—A bear follows on our trail—We return the compliment next day—The meeting, and what came of it—Expanding bullets wanting in penetration—Out of meat—Stalk and death of two blacktail—My last grizzly—Two of the ponies missing—Leave our “happy hunting-grounds”—Regrets—Crossing the Range—Arrival at Green Mountain—No blacktail—Return to Breckenridge.

THE following morning the ground was covered with snow to a depth of eight or nine inches, and as it was still coming down, we went early to the wood where we had seen the big bear, to ascertain if he, or any other, had been “using.” I had slipped aside to admire a view, which looked lovely in its silvery garb, when Wilkinson called out, “Come here and smell him.” As I joined him, I saw a black-and-white object, about the size of a badger, waddling off. “Coaly” dashed at it, and at once turned back, sneezing and snuffing in utter disgust. A second later, an odour so horribly offensive and overpowering saluted us, I had no occasion to ask what it was. I was prepared to find the smell of the skunk very disgusting, but nothing approaching to this. It was fully an hour before we fairly got over it, and days before “Coaly” was free from the sickening stench.

A bear had been “using,” and gone recently down the gulch into the thickest part of the pitch-pine forest. It was now snowing heavily, and as the tracks might soon be covered over, we at once followed on his trail. For miles we trudged through snow a foot deep, now over fallen timber, and then forcing our way, as best we could, through dense undergrowth; cutting and barking our shins against the jagged stumps till the blood oozed through my hose. But what cared we for that? we were now fairly on the trail of a grizzly, and might hear or see him at any moment. Twice over we came on places where he had lain, and, fearing we might have “jumped” him, anxiously looked at the trail beyond, to find he was still leisurely moving on. As it led down a steeper part of the gulch, over rocks and fallen trees, “Coaly” sniffed the air and gave a low growl. The next instant I fell heavily among some rocks, severely cutting my knuckles. Wilkinson, who had remained behind, in order that I might have the fight out alone, looked unutterably disgusted. Thinking all was over, I pressed forward a few



DEATH OF THE GRIZZLY.

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paces, which brought me in view of a more open part of the wood, when I saw the bear at about 100 yards, standing on his hind-legs and looking in my direction. Expecting him to take to his heels immediately, I was about to fire, when he began to move straight towards me. At times he was out of sight, and I began to fear he might be making off; but again the black back would appear, still coming up the hill. Covered as I was with snow, I knew if I but stood perfectly still, he was not likely to make me out, so waited until he reached some fallen timber, about twenty-five paces from where I stood, and as soon as he showed his head over it, dropped him dead, with a bullet between his eyes. A grizzly bagged at last, by honestly following on his trail! Better this than lying in wait over a carcass, which makes one feel like a thief working in the dark.

Camp life is no doubt very enjoyable, especially the evenings round the fire, but for these to be thoroughly enjoyed, a site should be chosen where the wind is, as a rule, steady. Unfortunately, we had chosen one where it almost never blew for two minutes the same way. No sooner were we seated than it blew the smoke in our eyes. Up we would jump to the other side, to be as quickly driven back. I often thought, "If friends at home could but get a peep at us dancing round the blazing fire, they would, burnt red by exposure to the sun as we were, take us for red Indians engaged in a war-dance!"

The following day we got on the trail of a bear which had been to one of the carcasses on the far side of the big ravine. After following him down to the bottom and through a dense wood, where we expected he must have taken up his quarters for the day, we found his tracks led up the bare mountain on the other side, over which, as it afforded no shelter of any kind, he had to a certainty gone. We were now four to five miles from camp, the snow fifteen inches deep, and the ground to be traversed on our way back steep and rough as it could well be, we had therefore to decide between giving him up, or making up our minds to camp out for the night in snow; an alternative which, having regard to the risk we should run of having nothing to eat save the small bit of lunch we had brought with us, I thought it more prudent to decline.

Tired after our long tramp, we rested during the forenoon of the next day, and went after lunch to photograph and skin the bear. Water was obtained by boiling snow in a kettle we had brought with us for the purpose, but the frost was so keen, the first picture, before I could reach the fire to dry it, was frozen, which shrivelled up the film, and of course ruined it. By using very hot water for developing, this difficulty was surmounted, and a fair picture obtained of the bear, with two views of the forest, taken within a few yards of where he fell, to show the sort of ground gone over in tracking the grizzly. (See Plate XVII.)

On the way, we had seen the fresh trail of a large bear; but as, having no curiosity to taste bear steak, we had not "gralloched" the one I had killed, and it would therefore be running a risk to longer delay skinning him, we were forced to leave the former alone, and take our chance of meeting him another day. The skinning was cold work, and from the carcass being frozen hard, a by no means easy task. The great forearms, as large and muscular as a Bengal tiger's, showed enormous power, and what a dangerous antagonist he would be at close quarters. Though we worked hard till dark, we were forced to leave part of the skinning till next day. After a night of hard frost, the day broke bright and clear, without a cloud to be seen; while Wilkinson and Siford went to finish the skinning, I had a look at the ground near the dead stag, where I had after sunset missed the big bear. Not only were tracks, which from their size we took to be his,

all about, but he had, the previous night, followed on ours till we were out of the wood, and then turned back to his nightly feed on wapiti venison. When Wilkinson joined me and saw the tracks, he said, "Guess we can jump him, but we shall have to be very cautious how we approach him. If in dense cover, he will get on his hind-legs, give a loud snort, and be off." As it was difficult to walk on the crisp snow without making a noise, we delayed following him up till midday, when we hoped the hot sun would have somewhat softened its surface. The trail led us for fully two miles through even a worse bit of country than the one we had traversed when I shot my first bear. There was the same thick undergrowth in places, but there was still more of the fallen timber, over which we had to make our way as best we could. We had been steadily going down-hill for a time, when we came to a small dip, on crossing which the bear had turned and again moved up-hill. About thirty yards above this dip a huge fallen tree lay across our path, with what appeared to be a flat piece of ground at its back, over which the sun shone straight in my eyes. Wilkinson had gone down into the dip; as I prepared to follow him, and a low growl came from "Coaly," it occurred to me we should be in a dangerous position, the bear being above us, if I only succeeded in wounding him. Just then I saw his dark back moving slowly behind the fallen tree. A low "hist" made Wilkinson remain still. Seeing that in a few seconds the grizzly would reach the root and come in view, I cocked my rifle and stood ready to receive him. Slowly, and wholly unaware of our proximity, he moved on until his head with part of the shoulder appeared, when, seeing me, he suddenly stopped and stood motionless as a statue, intently regarding, and apparently puzzled what to make of me. I slowly raised my rifle to shoot him through the head, but found it impossible to take aim, from the bead being covered with ice. Here was an awkward predicament. Quietly lowering the rifle, but without for a moment taking my eye off the bear's, I tried to scratch the ice off, and once more aimed at the head. But the bead was not yet clear of ice. Too much time having already been lost, and as it was impossible to make sure work of the head, while the heart was covered by the tree, I let him have it full in the shoulder. With a furious growl he was on his hind-legs, cuffing at the air, first on one side and then on the other, when, getting a sight of the opposite shoulder, I fired at it, and the great brute—again growling furiously—fell back behind the fallen tree, and all seemed over. Wilkinson, coming hastily to my side, insisted we should at once go round, and get above him. He had expected every moment we should have the bear on the top of us. When I told him it was all right, that we should find him dead behind the tree, he "hoped it was so, but he had no faith in these hollow bullets for bear." On coming down from above, we found him *gone!* He had fallen into a hollow behind the tree, rolled down-hill, got on his legs again, and gone off with the blood running from both sides. Hoping we should soon come up with him, we followed as quickly as we could, but he held on for miles, always down-hill, until he reached the Piney River. As, from his tracks, he was making as if to cross it, Wilkinson now made sure we should find him in the thick cover on the opposite bank. He had, however, kept down the shallow bed for nearly half a mile, until, reaching a deep pool, he had come ashore on a sandbank, again taken to the river, and we never found out where he had landed. That he had been hit full, in both shoulders, was pretty clearly shown in one part of the wood, where, in pushing through between two young aspens, he had left clotted blood on each, about two and a half feet from the ground. When ordering my ammunition before leaving England, I had expressed doubts to my gunmaker as to the Express expanding bullet having sufficient penetrating power to disable a grizzly, unless hit full in the head or heart, and his opinion then was—that the

experience of others, added to mine, has since led him to change it,—that if the hollow bullet could not stop him, nothing would. The truth is, while the expanding bullet is all that is required for such animals as the red-deer of the Highlands (which, when hit anywhere about the shoulder, go but a few yards, if they do not drop in their tracks), it does not penetrate far enough into the shoulder of a wapiti or grizzly, and wholly fails to smash the bones. Had I been using solid bullets, either shot would have gone through both shoulders, effectually disabling this bear on the spot. As it was, I lost him; one of the largest bears my guide had ever seen. We had, besides, made a narrow escape. Had he not, on getting my second bullet, fallen into the hollow behind the tree and rolled down-hill, he would, in all probability, have been on the top of us. From the tracks measuring the same, there could be little doubt this was the big bear I had come so near getting after sunset. We had now lost him, and I had to put up with the disappointment as best I could.

Being, as one of my men expressed it, "fairly run down," I was forced during the next few days to rest quietly in camp; while Wilkinson, with the view of replenishing the larder—our last haunch of venison, and all the bacon having been consumed—went after blacktail. Later on, I made one or two attempts to track up bears, but the trail leading me as far as the Piney River, where the snow had wholly disappeared, it became impossible to follow them farther. Wilkinson, though an excellent shot, and inferior to none as a hunter, had now one of those inexplicable runs of ill-luck which come to us all at times. Six days had passed during which he had daily seen blacktail, and occasionally got shots at them, but always returned with the same report, "No meat." Dusky grouse, on which we had lived for a week, being but poor food at the best, the matter was becoming serious. When he at last came back from a long, hard, and again unsuccessful day, I jokingly remarked, I should have to go myself. He so strongly pressed me to do so, though it seemed useless for me to try where he had failed, I agreed to hunt the country on one side of the camp, while he took the other. Snow had again fallen during the night, and now lay six inches deep. It was late in the afternoon before I saw game of any kind. On reaching the top of a hill, commanding an extensive view of the parks below, which I now carefully examined with the telescope, I made out in the distance a small herd of blacktail feeding close to a wood. Afraid they might change their ground, and I might not be able to get to them before dark, I made for the bottom of the gulch below with all possible speed, and worked my way for some distance up the bed of a stream, until I reached a stretch of fallen timber; where, from the trunks being piled to a height of three to four feet over each other, I lost some time in getting across. The rest of the stalk was easy enough. Stealing cautiously through the wood on the outside of which I had last seen the blacktail, I found they had moved higher up; but they were still quietly feeding, and by going back a short way and coming down from above, I succeeded in reaching, unseen, a nice bit of cover, within 120 yards of the herd, and dropped the buck with a bullet in the shoulder. While the does, their graceful heads thrown up, stood looking uncertain where to go, I rolled over the best one of them with my second barrel. Getting through the gralloching as quickly as I could, I laid the carcasses on a wapiti trail, that was well known to Siford, whom, after hurrying back to camp, I at once sent, with two ponies, to bring them in. And so starvation was averted. Wilkinson had again been unsuccessful, but was greatly relieved when he found there was once more enough and to spare of venison in camp.

The weather now became more threatening, and as the snow lay on the ranges to a

considerable depth, we had to bethink us of the risk we ran of being snowed up, if it should again storm heavily. I was loth, however, now that the valleys were once more covered with snow, to leave without having another day at bear. The three carcasses lying nearest to camp had by this time been consumed, but on going to the one in the wood which overlooked the big ravine, we found a bear had fed during the night. I had gone but a short way on his trail when I saw him between two spruce trees. Creeping cautiously under cover of some bushes, I succeeded in getting within a short distance, and dropped him dead with a bullet in his heart. He had a splendid coat, and was about the average size.

We had arranged to start the following morning, but were prevented by two of the ponies having stampeded in the night. As they were not to be found in the vicinity of camp, Siford rode back for some distance on the road by which we had come from the Eagle, but returned about midday, having found no "sign" in that direction. Hayes being, however, confident they must have gone that way to some meadows where the feeding was good, unless stampeded in the night by some prowling mountain lion or grizzly, at once started off on my mare. He came back shortly after dark, having found them, as he expected, quietly grazing close to our old camping-ground. The sorrel was so averse from leaving the good pasture, Hayes had been unable to drive him, and had been forced to get off, get hold of the lariat, and lead him all the way back.

The storm which had been gathering for days now came down in earnest; and as we had two marches to make before crossing the Range, this delay was unfortunate, and came very near stopping us altogether. It now snowed for forty-eight hours, more or less heavily, but eventually, though the snow came up to our ponies' saddle-girths, the "outfit" got over in safety. Though it seemed but as yesterday, so rapidly had the time flown, as we passed the scenes of some of our earlier stalks, how changed was the aspect now! Then clothed with verdure of varied hues, and teeming with insect life; now desolate and covered with snow, it had still, from the delicate shades of gray which pervaded the landscape, a rare beauty of its own. The keen piercing wind blowing in our faces almost froze us, but a few hours later, during which we had marched rapidly down the mountains, saw us camped again on the Blue, close to Green Mountain, out of snow, and in a comparatively mild climate.

I left these happy hunting-grounds with much regret. In spite of the exposure, hard work, and discomfort of sleeping amidst snow in a small tepee, but ill provided with blankets, the days spent on the Piney Range will ever be associated with some of the brightest of my life. Times there had been—and they had occurred often enough—when returning empty-handed, cold, and worn out, we thought longingly of the comforts of home, and began to question if the "game was worth the candle," when, like a ray of sunshine, there would come before us some great success achieved, and we decided, as we sat over the camp-fire, and looked at the great wapiti-heads grouped around, that the game was not only "worth the candle," but worth a great deal more than it had cost us. Yes—and a wise provision it is, that in our retrospect of the Past, these days stand out in bold relief, stimulating the sportsman to renewed exertion and hope, while those on which he had met with nothing but failure and disappointment fade away and are forgotten in the dim background.

Wilkinson had been, in the month of October, for some years back, successful in finding as many blacktail as he wanted in some extensive woods, which lay but a day's march from where we were then camped. With the view of now laying in a supply of venison, to last us during a



THE HOME OF THE GRIZZLY.

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hunt after mountain bison in South Park, we had decided on as a finale to my sporting tour, we moved there the next day, only to find we had been forestalled. Tracks of hunters were numerous enough, but though we worked hard for four days, we only saw one or two blacktail, without getting a shot at any. On one of these occasions, while following for a long distance on the trail of a buck I had seen go over a ridge, I ended by losing my way, but taking care not to get turned round, and guided by the setting sun, I held on straight in a direction which I calculated must bring me out of the forest within a few miles of camp. While crossing a small opening, shortly after sunset, I came on the fresh tracks of a mountain lion. After pushing my way for some time longer through the dense wood, I at last reached the valley of the "Blue," and saw, to my relief, our camp-fire about two miles off.

The following morning we returned to Green Mountain. Leaving our men to come on with the "outfit," Wilkinson and I started at daybreak the morning after for Breckenridge, a ride of forty miles, where we safely arrived, late the same night, and where, in Silverthorn's hotel, I enjoyed to the full, as I had never done before, the luxury of a feather bed.

CHAPTER XII.

Leave for South Park—Antelope—A pot-hunter spoils the stalk—The Beaver—Wonderful skill and ingenuity shown in the construction of the dam—After Mountain Bison—Eight days of useless toil—Our donkeys—Take farewell of my guide—Wilkinson as a sportsman—Denver stage road—“Bronko Kate’s” last ugly fit—Arrival in Hall’s Gulch—Extermination of big game—Game law of Colorado—A warning to English sportsmen.

THREE days were devoted to packing trophies, photographic apparatus, etc., getting them despatched by freight waggon to Denver City, and arranging for their being forwarded thence by freight train to New York. Having early in the day sent Siford forward with the donkey-train, we left at midday to cross the range which divides the Pacific watershed from that of the Atlantic; and late in the afternoon camped within three miles of Hamilton. On passing through it the following morning we found ourselves in South Park, and in view of the mountains where we hoped to come on the trail of the bison. A fine herd of antelope were grazing in the distance, and as I was anxious to add one or two good heads of the prong-horn to my collection, we sent Siford forward with the train, and waited until the herd disappeared over a ridge for which they were making. As soon as the last of them had gone over, we rode quickly forward, and after picketing our ponies, cautiously crept to the crest of the ridge, hoping to find them within shot at the back. At first we could see nothing, but after a time they appeared from behind some scrub, quietly feeding on a low bit of ground. A long and very difficult stalk had enabled me to get within about 300 yards, when “whizz” came a bullet over my head, followed by the report of a rifle, and the next instant they were scampering off across the park. On looking back, I saw, in the distance, a hunter, who, finding I was before him, probably wished to spoil my sport, or had taken his chance of a shot “into the brown” of them. As there was no chance of our being able to come up with them again, and we had some ten miles of the park to cross, without landmark or trail to guide us save the hills in the distance, and if caught in the snow, which now began to fall lightly, we ran some risk of not being able to make the gap in the mountains that led to our destination at Rock Creek, we lost no time in mounting our ponies and galloping across the park as quickly as we could. Fortunately, it soon ceased snowing. The mountain gap was safely reached, and after a further ride of three miles we arrived at Rock Creek, just as Siford was beginning to unload the donkeys.

Snow coming down heavily next morning, and the mountains being then, for the first time since my arrival, wrapped in dense mist, we were forced to remain quietly in camp. After breakfast I watched with much interest Wilkinson engaged in skinning a beaver, which Siford had shot with his revolver. He drew my attention to a curious secretion in a bag near the vent, called by trappers the "bark secretion." This the beaver is said to deposit in the sand in spring, but for what purpose has not as yet been clearly ascertained. The incisors and under jaw of the skull, which I preserved, are of great strength. The former, of a bright orange colour, are long; in front of the hardest enamel, but of a softer substance at the back, so that as the tooth wears away, a chisel-like edge is maintained. The patient industry and wonderful skill in adapting the means to the end, shown by the beaver in constructing these wonderful dams, almost prove it to be guided more by reason than instinct. The object sought to be attained is, to form a pool of water, of a depth sufficient to insure its not being frozen to the bottom, in which, close to the bank, they build their lodges, and lay up their winter stores of food, consisting of willows and the bark of cottonwood trees, of alders, etc. The height of the dam—which, to give it greater strength, is always built convex towards the stream—depends on the fall of the current. In the one photographed, owing to the fall being gradual at the place selected for its construction, a height of four and a half feet had been found sufficient. From their working under water, upwards from the bed of the stream, it is difficult to ascertain the method followed, or how they get the branches to remain at the bottom. These are always placed with the cut end downward, the upper shoots serving—as they face the current—to catch and retain any débris coming down. The materials employed are branches, sticks, roots, mud, stones, etc.; the whole so ingeniously interlaced and worked up, as to form a structure perfectly watertight. Should a flood cause the water to rise higher in the lodge than suits them, they make a partial break in the dam, until the desired level is reached. One of these breaks is seen in the dam photographed.

Our hunt after mountain bison was destined to end in failure. We searched the whole country over which the herd is known to range, till the 17th of November, but without finding "sign" either of bison, or game of any description. After a snowstorm which lasted for several days a severe frost set in, when the cold became so intense, we were reluctantly forced to give up the chase. It might at first sight appear, as if in coming so far to hunt a small herd of some thirty bison, the remnant of the countless herds, which once in comparative safety roamed over the mountains girdling the South Park, and have as their range now a tract of some twenty square miles, we had undertaken an almost hopeless task. Had the weather, however, been fine, Wilkinson had no doubt he could have been able to strike their trail. Once on it, we should have had no difficulty, though possibly some amount of hard work, in sooner or later coming up with them. As it was, snow falling almost daily for the first five days, all "sign" had been covered up, and we had had eight days of bootless toil and exposure, amid scenery far inferior to what we saw on the Piney and Eagle.

Though our ponies and donkeys had had hard times of it, having no food except the grass they could pick up by scraping away the snow, they were still in by no means bad condition. How they managed to exist and fairly thrive, was a marvel. A Highland pony on such fare would have knocked up in a week.

Our donkeys were a source of constant amusement. First we had Wilkinson's three; staid old "*Feannie*," wise and sagacious, who always led the way, and her yearling foal—a little pet, but a sad nuisance on the march, engaging the mother's attention when she ought to have been

jogging her best, and when out of sight, making her bray, so as to scare off everything in the way of game within earshot; "Brigham," a piebald, another son of "Jeannie's," smart and active, with a strange propensity for zigzagging every yard of the way, but always well to the front; "Ben," a large powerful jack, weighing 550 lbs., who gave no trouble, following where "Jeannie" led. Those that had been supplied to me by contract were, as might be supposed, an inferior lot. "Beecher" and "Curly," two "studs," who during the first month fought furious battles for supremacy, made night hideous with their brayings, and lost me more than one chance of a shot; the venerable "Lazarus," persecuted by the rest, who always ran for protection to camp; "Calamity Jane," most appropriately named, being the slowest and most useless donkey in the "outfit"; "Dolly," a strong, sturdy animal, the best of the whole, who not only carried her load well, rarely unshipping it, but—what is rather an unusual thing for a donkey—she *led* well. Latterly she carried my photographic apparatus, and did it without mistake. "Flora" and "Topsy," two more of the number, were fairly good donkeys, went at a good pace, and gave but little trouble. Last of all came "Kitty," a wilful, wicked jade, constantly getting rid of her load and giving no end of trouble.

These donkeys could with ease carry a load of 150 pounds each over the mountains, doing their ten to fifteen miles a day, according to the style of country. They were one-and-all inveterate camp thieves. Before retiring for the night, everything had to be carefully put away. They would come round the camp-fire to warm themselves, when, if they found anything they could possibly eat, or, failing that, destroy, it was gone, or found useless in the morning. I once saw two of them get hold of a coat, and in a few seconds it was torn into shreds. My measuring tape having one evening been forgotten by the camp fire, it was found in bits in the morning.

The manner in which animals appear to be aware of an impending change of weather some considerable time before the change occurs, is very remarkable. Our donkeys were almost as good as a barometer to us. When the weather was going to be fine, they fed and lay about under the trees several hundred yards from camp; but, however promising it might look at the time, they never failed, on the night preceding a storm, to come as close to camp as they could get, standing about and wistfully regarding us as we sat round the camp fire.

Leaving Siford to follow with the donkey-train, I took farewell of my guide, and started alone, on the morning of the 18th November, from Rock Creek, to ride to Hall's Gulch. I parted from Wilkinson with regret. A more agreeable guide or better sportsman it would indeed have been difficult to find. He had not spared himself in trying to show me sport; and to the pains he took in skinning and marking my trophies, I owe the excellent condition in which they arrived, and the comparative ease with which I was able to set them up. An excellent shot, and an indefatigable walker, he made it a rule never to fire at an animal unless short of meat, or he wanted its skin or head, and no matter how tired he might be, it was with him a point of honour to stick, as long as daylight lasted, to the trail of one he had wounded. Passionately fond of the life he led, he had acquired a thorough knowledge of the habits of the animals he hunted, and many a pleasant and profitable hour I spent over the camp fire, listening to his interesting descriptions of what he had seen and noted. As showing the thorough sportsman-like feeling of the man, I may mention an incident which occurred when we were on the Eagle. After pitching camp, late one evening, he proposed we should visit at sunset a salt-lick in its vicinity, to see if any animals were "*using*." The "lick," which lay on

¹ In a letter
² by poachers fro
no less than three
Pass; and during
of course a sprint

the right of a meadow, was separated from a great forest by a strip of low sage-brush, through which a well-worn trail showed the game were in the habit of crossing in their visits to the salt-lick. To my surprise, Wilkinson crossed this track, and a few hundred yards farther on we sat down on a knoll and watched. Presently a fine stag, the only wapiti we were destined to see on the Eagle, came out of the wood, until, reaching the spot where we had crossed, he wheeled and hastily retired. Annoyed at the chance I had missed, I pointed out the mistake we had made,—how, “if we had lain behind the sage-brush, the stag would most certainly have been ours.” His answer I felt to be a well-merited rebuke,—“To lie in wait for an unsuspecting stag at a salt-lick is what I never did in my life!” He had, as he informed me, only come to see what “show of game there was.” Though he had, I believe, killed more bears than any hunter in that part of the country, he had no marvellous tales to tell of desperate encounters and hairbreadth escapes. When he told me stories of adventures of the kind which others had met with, he would quaintly add with a quiet smile, indicative of his utter disbelief, “But that happened a long way off.”

After leaving Wilkinson at Rock Creek, and riding some four miles, I reached a corner of South Park, where, turning to the right, I found myself in the Denver stage-road, the best road I had seen in the mountains. The scenery between South Park and Hall’s Gulch was tame and far inferior to what I had for nearly three months revelled in on the Piney and the Eagle; indeed, but for an occasional view of some mountain range with its snow peaks, it may be described, in so far as its scenery is concerned, as wholly devoid of interest. The snow which had so recently fallen had by this time melted under the hot sun, and the road being dry and excellent walking, with the view of sparing “Bronko Kate” after the hard work she had lately had, I got off to walk a few miles. This was so much to her liking, she seized an opportunity that I incautiously gave her to trot ahead for a few yards. When I tried to get hold of her again, I found she had taken another “ugly fit.” She never would allow me to get within two yards of her head; various were the artifices I tried, such as running quickly round a ridge to get in front of her, but the sly jade, as wary as an old hind, was up to every move in the game, and provokingly maintained her advantage till we arrived in Hall’s Gulch at four in the afternoon. This was my last ride on “Bronko Kate.”

In Hall’s Gulch I disposed of donkey-train and ponies. The mining season, when donkeys are in demand for carrying ore down from the mines, being over, mine realised about half the sum I paid for them; while the ponies brought about two-thirds of the cost. Even then I was much better off than if I had hired.

The extinction of the game of the Rocky Mountains is but a question of a few years.¹ I have already referred to the reckless slaughter committed by American hunters, and to the feeling which, too late in the day, is springing up in settled parts of the country against it. The game law of Colorado, I believe, punishes with fine and imprisonment the killing of game when not required as food, but so far as I could learn, it had never been enforced. English sportsmen, however, may rest assured, if they, as but too many of their number are now in the habit of doing,

¹ In a letter received from my friend J—— since these pages were written, he says, “You remember how the Eagle River was poached by pot-hunters from Leadville. It is a thousand per cent worse now. Prospectors and hunters are swarming through the whole district, no less than three hundred wintering on the Eagle at this moment; while in the Middle Park the same thing is going on down at Goat Pass; and during the coming season the rush of prospectors will be immense. Hence the chances for good sport are almost nil, though of course a sprinkling of wapiti will, for a short time, be found.”

simply go to the Rocky Mountains for the purpose of killing all they can, irrespective of age or sex, and then come home and boast in the columns of *The Field* of the great bags they had made, American hunters, who have already taken alarm, and are deeply incensed at such proceedings, will very soon set the law in motion in their case, if indeed, to judge from the manner in which I often heard the question discussed, they do not ask the Legislature to put a stop to our shooting there altogether. I give this warning to English sportsmen before it is too late. Our kind and hospitable cousins are still prepared, as they over and over again assured me, to accord a hearty welcome to those of our countrymen who are content to shoot only such animals as they can in some way utilise; but is it for one moment to be supposed they can with equanimity read such an account as lately appeared in the columns of *The Field*, of 400 head of big game slain in four months by one Englishman, of the numbers he must necessarily have left to uselessly rot on the mountains, and the wounded which escaped to die a painful and lingering death? It is with no feeling of jealousy I, in the name of humanity, raise my protest against such wanton slaughter. Far be it from me to envy the man who finds pleasure in the needless destruction of animal life. My bag of big game comprised but thirty-two head, all told. I could with ease, had I desired it, have more than trebled the number. If small, I have at least the satisfaction of knowing—and surely it is one a humane man will deem a far higher reward—that during the whole trip I never shot a stag whose head I did not bring home as a trophy; never fired at a hind; that we only killed such blacktail as we really needed; and that, save in the case of the grizzly bear, we never lost a wounded animal.

"OUTFIT" required by a sportsman and his three men, for camping out for three months in the Rocky Mountains. The *net* cost, after selling stock, tents, etc., should not exceed 500 dollars, or about £100 sterling.

Tent and Blankets.	24 lbs. coffee.	Stewpan.
Do. for men.	50 lbs. sugar.	Wash-basin.
4 Bronko ponies.	6 gallons syrup.	Gridiron.
4 Mexican saddles.	½ case preserved milk.	Tin dipper and fork.
4 bridles.	12 sacks salt.	Coffee-pot.
4 headstalls.	12 tins pepper.	Teapot.
40 yards of rope for lariats, etc.	4 bottles Worcester sauce.	1 doz. tin plates.
10 donkeys with pack saddles.	4 do. pickles.	1 do. knives and forks.
Donkey whip.	24 tins sardines.	½ do. tea-cups.
STORES.	12 cans currant jelly.	½ do. spoons.
600 lbs. flour.	12 do. strawberry jelly.	½ do. teaspoons.
15 cans baking powder.	12 do. pears.	Skinning knife.
200 lbs. potatoes.	20 lbs. soap.	Hatchet.
50 lbs. Ranch butter.	8 lbs. alum.	Small axe.
10 hams.	1 bottle of arnica.	Shoeing hammer.
50 lbs. bacon.	Dutch oven.	Nails.
10 lbs. beef.	2 frying pans.	Pick and shovel.
40 lbs. lard.	2 large pans.	Lantern.
14 lbs. tea.	Camp kettle.	Candles.
		Waggon sheet.

As ten donkeys could not carry all these stores, cooking utensils, etc., half the quantity could at first be taken, and a trip, when necessary, made to the nearest town for the remainder.

